

# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

□ PAST & PRESENT

No.17

February / March 1989

£2.25

**Lee's Infantry, 1862**

**Maiwand, 1880**

**Blenheim Flags**

**1914-18:  
Battlefield  
Archaeology**

**Medieval  
Re-enactors**

**Dan Shomron**





# MILITARY ILLUSTRATED

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No. 17

ISSN 0268-8328

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1989

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Our cover illustration, taken in Miller's Cornfield on the Antietam battlefield, shows a reconstruction of one of Lee's infantry — see article p.8.

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Editorial address:  
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## EDITORIAL

Our cover illustration, showing a model posing a Confederate uniform reconstruction right against the maize of the 'Miller Cornfield' on the eastern side of the Hagerstown Pike on the Antietam battlefield, typifies the care brought to his article by first-time contributor **Ross M. Kimmel**. Ross, born in 1945 in Washington DC, is a long-experienced Civil War and Revolutionary War re-enactor who since his time at the University of Maryland has applied academic levels of discipline to 'living history', which he views as a form of experimental archaeology. He is an accomplished pattern-drafter and tailor; author of numerous publications; and assistant editor of *Military Collector and Historian*, the journal of the Company of Military Historians in the USA.

We also welcome **Andrew Cormack**, whose professional and personal interests cover a wide range – a member of the Sealed Knot for 17 years, and currently Adjutant of the King's Lifeguard of Foote within that organisation, he works on cataloguing the collections of uniforms,

flying clothing, decorations, and silver at the RAF Museum, Hendon. Andrew, born in 1953 and educated at Oakham School, Rutland, is a modern history graduate of London University who worked at the Imperial War Museum before taking up a post at Hendon in 1979.

Our friend **John Laffin** contributes a fascinating glimpse of a hobby which he has followed, and perfected, over many years: battlefield archaeology, specifically on the Western Front. John, born Australian but resident in the UK for many years now, saw action as an infantryman in the Middle East and the Pacific in the Second World War; he spent the next 40 years as a journalist, author, novelist and broadcaster specialising in Middle Eastern affairs, and has published more than 90 books. To any reader intrigued by John's article we recommend his recent book *Battlefield Archaeology*, published in this country by Ian Allan Ltd. and in the USA by Hippocrene; it contains a wealth of useful, practical information.

The photographs of the medieval re-enactment at Le Puy were taken by **John Howe**, whose presence in that charming but mildly spooky

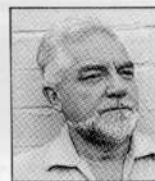


**Ross Kimmel Andrew Cormack**

spot was made the more memorable by his height, pallor, and all-enveloping black cowl... Born in Vancouver, BC, in 1957, John studied art at Strasbourg, and now lives and works as an illustrator in Switzerland with his wife and young son. His work is most widely known in the realms of fairytales, fantasy, and the borderlands between myth and history. He disclaims any ambitions in historical illustration as such; but is devoted to realism in that he draws only from life and existing objects, and strives for the historically appropriate. He finds the more rigorous levels of the re-enactment scene a useful academic school, and an inspiration.

### Presidio Books

We are asked to note that the list of this well-known American military publisher is now available in the UK



**John Laffin**

**John Howe**

from Greenhill Books/Lionel Leventhal Ltd. of Park House, 1 Russell Gardens, London NW11 9NN.

### Victorian Military Fair

The Victorian Military Society, the energetic organisation devoted to encouraging the study of military matters of the 19th century, will be holding its next Fair on Saturday 11 March 1989, 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., at the Victory Services Club, Seymour St., London W2 – just off the Edgware Rd., near Marble Arch underground station. Modellers, wargamers, and collectors of militaria, prints, medals and books should find plenty to absorb them; and there will be a special exhibition of items and photographs relevant to the Boer War. Visitors are encouraged to turn up in period costume if they wish, and awards will be made to the most impressively dressed lady and gentleman.

### Video Releases to Rent:

'Vietnam'

(Screen Entertainment: 15)

'Sword of Honour' (Castle: 15)

Two recent television mini-series dramatise Australian involvement in Vietnam. *Vietnam* (1986), broadcast in Britain a few months ago, tells the story of the effect of the war on a family between 1964 and 1972. Barry Otto plays Douglas Goddard, an Australian politician who advises Prime Minister Robert Menzies to introduce conscription. However, the question of sending troops to Vietnam in response to a request by the American government becomes a more personal issue when his university drop-out son Phil's birthday is chosen in the conscription lottery. Phil (Nicholas Eadie) is among the first conscripts to be sent to Vietnam, while his rebellious sister Megan (Nicole Kidman) becomes increasingly involved with the anti-war movement.

The plot of *Sword of Honour* (1986) is similar. Andrew Clarke plays Lt. Tony Lawrence, a regular soldier who has been presented with the sword for being 'soldier of the year' at military training academy. His best friend Lt. Frank Vittorio (Alan Fletcher) marries his sister Vivienne just before their battalion is sent to Vietnam. Tony's girlfriend Esse (Tracy Mann) goes to university in Melbourne, and becomes involved in the anti-war movement. Their political views diverge to a point where their relationship becomes impossible to sustain, and Esse becomes involved with an American student.

In both series, the policy of relocating Vietnamese villages to areas supposedly safe from Communist influence near the Australian base is seen to create its own problems. The

villagers resent being moved from their ancestral homelands and being forced to live on hand-outs. It also enables Viet Cong infiltrators and tax-collectors to operate closer to military areas. However, the relocation of the villages serves as a convenient plot device to enable the heroes of both series to fall in love with Vietnamese girls.

Both series also portray the problems of readjustment to civilian life after the war: indeed, the emotional traumas suffered by the Goddard family in *Vietnam* led to one critic dubbing the series 'Full Metal Neighbours'. The series does make a sincere attempt to portray the political pressures which led to Australian involvement in Vietnam; though some may find simplistic the contrasting portrayals of Aussie soldiers' and American GIs' behaviour toward civilians. *Vietnam* comes on two tapes lasting just under six hours in total. This is approximately one hour less than the five episodes broadcast on television, although some brief censorial cuts have been restored. *Sword of Honour* also comes on two tapes, lasting some five hours in total. Both series were well acted and produced, but rely on the conventions of melodrama as much as those of the war-movie.

### Video Releases to Buy:

'Lawrence of Arabia'

(RCA/Columbia: PG)

*Visions of War*

(GMH Entertainments)

*Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) begins with his fatal motor-cycle accident in 1935, and then reverts to his two years in the Middle East during the First World War. It shows how Law-

rence organised the Arabs into an effectively co-ordinated fighting force, resulting in the capture of Aqaba after an exhausting trek through the desert, successful operations against the Hejaz-Medina railway, and the eventual capture of Damascus. The film is less concerned with military strategy than with an exploration of Lawrence's personality. The sexual abuse and torture he suffered at the hands of the Turkish Bey in Deraa is toned down for the film, although the incident is used to explain Lawrence's sudden change of attitude towards the Arabs, the desert, and himself. The film was impeccably cast, and introduced Peter O'Toole in the title rôle. Egyptian actor Omar Sharif made his international film debut as Sherif Ali ibn el Kharish, Jack Hawkins played Gen. Allenby, and Alec Guinness played Prince Feisal. Arthur Kennedy played 'Jackson Bentley', partly based on American newspaper correspondent Lowell Thomas, whose reportage and films did much to create the Lawrence myth.

Robert Bolt's screenplay is arguably too closely based on Lawrence's autobiographical *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Some historians, particularly Arabs, claim that Lawrence tried to take all the credit for a national movement which had gained momentum before he arrived. Whether or not the film is guilty of perpetuating a myth, it proved to be a worthy successor to *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) for producer Sam Spiegel and director David Lean. The photography, on locations in Jordan, Morocco and Spain, is breathtaking, and the film features a haunting score by Maurice Jarre.

## ON THE SCREEN

The latest release in GMH Entertainments *Visions of War* documentary series is *Russian-German War 1939-45*, and is in three 50-minute parts. Part I, *The Politics of Fear*, deals with the Nazi-Soviet pact and the dismemberment of Eastern Europe by the two countries prior to 'Operation Barbarossa'. Part II, *The Killing Ground*, deals with the catastrophic Russian collapse in June 1941, up to the counter-offensive which led to the surrender of Von Paulus and his Sixth Army at Stalingrad. Part III, *Breakout to Berlin*, includes the tank battle of Kursk and the final days of the Third Reich.

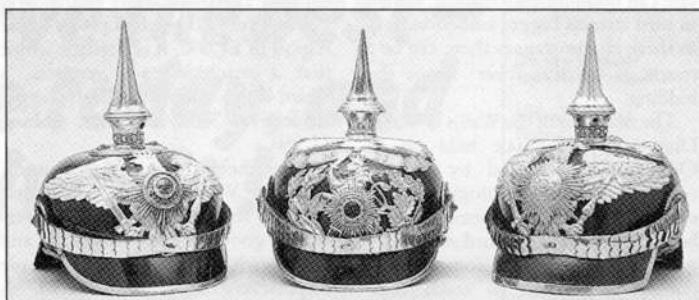
The description of the series on the sleeve is misleading: the claim that 'the bulk of this film footage has never been seen outside the Soviet Union', may have been true when they were compiled for Canadian Television (CTV) in 1973, but is inappropriate now. Likewise, the assertion that 'every foot of film has been authenticated', probably originally a Soviet claim, is erroneous: for example, the famous shot of the meeting of the two pincers of the Russian counter-offensive at Stalingrad is well known to be a reconstruction. The series was a condensation of ten hours of edited documentary footage supplied by the Soviet government, and consequently lacks maps or interviews with survivors. The commentary is clear but is not free from factual errors (e.g., the Russians are credited with inventing the Goliath miniature tank) and has to compete with a monotonous and repetitive score. Nonetheless, the series contains much interesting and unfamiliar footage and will certainly be of interest to the student of the Second World War. **Stephen J. Greenhill**



As the year closes there is the usual flow of reference books and booklets listing prices realised on a wide range of lots sold by the main auction houses. Dealers, and many collectors, will begin their perusal of the assembled prices; but many may draw some very mistaken conclusions.

While such compilations have some value, they need to be used with understanding. Each and every auction is a unique occasion, and prices realised are peculiar to that particular sale. It may be that at one auction there are two buyers each keen to acquire a particular piece, and their 'battle' will push the bidding

## THE AUCTION SCENE



well past the usual value. In the next sale an almost identical piece may

well sell for much less, in the absence of two determined rival bidders.

Three of the fine collection of Pickelhaube helmets and other Imperial German headgear which were a feature of Wallis & Wallis's Diamond Jubilee auction. Left to right: Lot 47, Prussian General Staff officer's (£1,200); Lot 48, 1st Grand Ducal Hessian (Leibgarde) Infantry No.115, officer's, (£2,500); Lot 49, Adjutant's, Lippe Detmold Infantry Regiment (£1,700). (Wallis & Wallis)

Another point to bear in mind is that while a small illustration may suggest that two pieces are identical, there may well be minute differences in condition that make one example

continued on page 6

## LETTERS

We will be glad to publish readers' letters which advance the information given in our articles; and to pass on to contributors queries more suitably dealt with by private correspondence. We reserve the right to select, for reasons of space, only the most relevant passages for publication. Please address letters to our editorial box number, given on Page 3, and mark envelope 'Letters'.

### Knife law

May I refer to 'MI' No.13, and your column 'The Auction Scene', which, as a serving police officer, I read with interest. I have yet to see the Acts referred to, but I personally do not believe we collectors have any more to fear from the Criminal Justice Bill than we do from current legislation.

According to Section 1, Prevention of Crime Act 1953, it is at present an offence for any person to have an offensive weapon with him in any public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, the onus of proving which is already on the accused. An offensive weapon is defined as any article made, adapted or intended for such use... This obviously embraces all swords, bayonets, fighting knives, etc., including antique firearms, not covered by the Firearms Act 1968.

Any collector having his newly-acquired bayonet with him en route home after purchase may appear to be 'in play' for the police. [But] when was the last time a serious collector was prosecuted for such an offence? In 12 years' police service, and 20 years' collecting, I have not come across [such] an arrest or prosecution, and I do not see why the police should change now. Yes, collectors have been stopped and questioned; but the reasonable excuse of collecting has always been good enough. (This letter is my personal view, and not necessarily that of my Chief Officer.)

S. Risby,  
Luton, Beds.

### Machine Gun Corps

I have received my latest copy ('MI' No.14) and once again found the contents outstanding. [But] the brief history of the Machine Gun Corps

which accompanied Martin Pegler's article on the Vickers... may cause some confusion.

The MGC was formed by Royal Warrant on 22 October 1915 with three branches, as stated; but the Brigade MG Coys. mentioned did not become an integral part of the MGC until March 1918, when they were transferred *en bloc* away from their parent units.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War heavy machine gun sections had been introduced into every battalion of infantry on a scale of two guns per battalion. These sections were in turn removed from their parent battalions early in 1916 and grouped together as Brigade MG Coys.; e.g. 9th Bde.MG Coy., 3rd Div., was formed from the MG sections of the 1st Bn., Northumberland Fusiliers; 4th Bn., Royal Fusiliers; 12th (Service) Bn., W. Yorks Regt.; and, from 4 April 1916, 13th (Service) Bn., King's Regt. - the units which made up the brigade.

Despite becoming an independent unit within 9th Bde., and used in brigade or divisional support, members of 9th Bde.MG Coy. continued to wear the insignia of their parent battalions, as did all other MG sections serving in such companies; the insignia of the MGC were not adopted until March 1918. At the same time Bde.MG Coy. members who became casualties were replaced by men from their parent battalion, giving regimental continuity to an otherwise independent unit.

By early 1916 the first officers of the MGC began to arrive in France, and were attached to Bde.MG Coys.: e.g., of ten officers on the establishment of 149th Bde.MG Coy., 50th (Northumbrian) Div. in May 1916, only three were from the MGC, the remainder coming from the Territorial battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers which made up 149th Brigade. Actual MGC companies do not appear to have made their way overseas until early 1917, becoming the fourth MG Company within a division.

As stated in the article, these MG Coys. were formed into MG Battalions and lettered A, B, C and D Coys., while personnel of the Bde.MG Coys. were absorbed into the MGC, and adopted insignia of that Corps.

I do hope this letter will not create further confusion among your

readers, and I look forward to more excellent reading from 'MI'.

Graham Stewart  
Darlington, Co. Durham.

### 'Sgt. Rice's Kitbag'

May I comment upon some aspects of Martin Windrow's article in 'MI' No.14? There is nothing mysterious about the blanking out of certain items in respect of personal details - i.e. place of birth, nationality, etc. - in AB 64 Pt.1. My own book shows similar deletions, made on embarkation in 1943; however, details of next of kin still remained on pp.10 and 11. My own book covers 1942-48; and it is perhaps significant that a second AB 64, issued in 1948 on re-enlistment, does not contain spaces for this information on p.2. As I was, at that time, a junior NCO of infantry, it would appear that such deletions were standard practice.

I do not think that Sgt. Rice's release in March 1946 was 'remarkably early'. The release system was governed by both age and service. In my own case I enlisted in June 1942 (Sgt. Rice in March 1942) at the age of 18, and my Age/Service group was '48', due out in March 1947; but he was some 19 years older.

His number '2387476' must have been among the last Corps Numbers to be issued, as by June 1942 all enlistments were to the General Service Corps initially, and numbers allotted were '142????', mine being '14215748'. The reference in the article to erasure of an atypical prefix to his number is peculiar, as it is my impression that only the RASC had prefixes (S/ for Supply and T/ for Transport); but it is possible that other Corps had similar arrangements.

A. J. Moore, TD  
Blundellsands,  
Liverpool

### Early web equipment

Concerning Michael Barthorp's interesting article on British Mounted Infantry ('MI' No.15), some clarification may be in order. He describes the tendency of webbing equipment 'as used in the US Army' to stretch and so spill ammunition. While a similar problem seems to have occurred with the earliest models of the US Army equipment, this was not nearly so severe, and was eliminated altogether by the development, in about 1880, of the

process of weaving the cartridge loops integrally with the belt. Subsequently the US Army used this belt for many years without difficulty... under the most extreme conditions of weather and terrain.

The reason for this marked difference between US and British experience is suggested by A. A. Lethern and W. P. Wise in *The Development of the Mills Woven Cartridge Belt, 1877-1956* (London; Mills Equipment C. Ltd., n.d., pp.10-11):

'It had been found necessary to provide means for each... soldier in South Africa to carry more ammunition into action, and a very light and flimsy woven bandolier was devised, solely for emergency use, which could be thrown away after use. Bandoliers, woven to accommodate 100 single cartridges in loops, were filled before being packed for transportation, to be ready for immediate issue... The idea was an excellent one, provided the bandoliers were used as supplementary means for augmenting the ammunition supply... Owing to the difficulties in equipping the Mounted Infantry, the men were forced... to wear this Emergency Bandolier as part of their regular equipment. Being of such light texture, it could not stand up to... campaign conditions for any length of time...'

Lethern & Wise also describe webbing equipment designed and issued for regular use in South Africa. This included cartridge belts similar to the US pattern, along with bandoliers, rifle slings and water bottle straps. None of this equipment seems to have presented difficulties. Interestingly, although webbing equipment was first developed in the USA by a US Army officer, and although the US Army had used only webbing cartridge belts for a quarter of a century, the British Army in South Africa seems to have been the first to receive other equipment made of this material.

Lethern & Wise note two other advantages of webbing over leather in addition to those cited by Mr. Barthorp: it was lighter; and - the original reason for its development - it did not cause rapid corrosion of brass cartridges. Cartridges carried in leather loops, if not cleaned carefully and often, were likely to jam in the rifle.

G. T. Atwood  
Canton, Ohio, USA



far more desirable than another. Another point is that auction catalogues cost money to produce, money which must be deducted from the profit on the sale. Too long a description may cost the auction house almost the entire profit on that lot in type-setting and print costs. Catalogue descriptions are thus, of necessity, fairly brief unless the item is of particularly high value; and such concise descriptions may well omit features which affect the price, and which can only be appreciated fully by buyers who attend the viewing and sale.

Since these compilations rely on the auction houses for their pictures, the lower-priced articles are not included, since they are seldom illustrated: the cost of photography is borne by the seller, and if added to the commission, insurance and other costs deducted from the price realised, it may leave the sum he actually receives disappointingly low.

If the quoted prices are judged against the background of these factors, and not taken as the definitive value for any particular group of objects, then a study of the figures can be useful. They give a very general idea of values; and it may be possible to draw some conclusions as to trends and fashions by comparing them with the previous years' figures. One unfortunate consequence is that they may give the non-specialist dealer a mistaken impression of values on items which

he only handles occasionally.

The occasion itself may affect prices, since advance publicity of a sale can build up anticipation, which in turn attracts bigger audiences; and in these circumstances there can be a touch of 'auction-fever' about the bidding.

The occasion of the Wallis & Wallis Diamond Jubilee sale held on 12 October was marked by an all-colour illustrated catalogue and a choice selection of items, which helped the house to record some very good prices (although some 30 lots out of 201 failed to reach their reserves). Shoulder belt plates seem to be continuing their upward trend, realising prices ranging from £260 to £420. Another group of objects, tip-staves, continue to soar in price, and one with an 1836 inscription went for £370 – an astonishing jump in value over the last few years.

The sale offered an outstanding collection of *Pickelhaube* helmets, all of which made good prices. A fine Saxon Guard Reiter officer's helmet, complete with undress spike and lion crest, realised £10,000 with a telephone bid. British Army Home Service pattern helmets also did very well, two Volunteer examples reaching £625 and £300. As always, the lance cap proved popular, and an officer's example of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers sold for £2,050.

Weapons were not neglected, and a cased example of the sought-after Dragoon Colt percussion revolver –

once the property of Lt. Gen. Gordon Caulfield – realised £5,000; a cased Colt London Navy revolver sold for £2,100. Rapiers of the early 17th century all reached prices in the region of £1,000; it is perhaps ironic that a machine-made weapon, a Third Reich diplomat's dress dagger made over 300 years later, realised £1,250.

At Sotheby's sale of Aeronautica, Military Vehicles and Arms and Armour on 19 October bayonets made good prices – Baker and Brunswick rifle bayonets made respectively £132 and £82.50. A Scottish dirk complete with its sheath and cutlery realised £572. Examples of unexpected prices were provided by a pair of Continental percussion pistols which sold for £1,045 after an expected top estimate of £700; and a Victorian 1821 cavalry sword of the 14th Light Dragoons, estimated at £200 maximum, which sold for £572.

In the afternoon there seemed to be no great demand for non-flying fibreglass film replicas of Second World War fighters; suitable only for static displays taking up considerable space, they were clearly a rather specialised taste. However, a jeep in Long Range Desert Group styling sold for the surprising figure of £4,180.

At Christie's medal sale on 22 November the Victoria Cross, and associated memorabilia, of Lt. William Leefe Robinson, the 1916 'Zep-



One of the military vehicles sold at Sotheby's, Sussex, on 19 October was this Bedford OY petrol tanker restored for use in the film 'A Bridge Too Far'; not used, it has been a static exhibit ever since, and now requires total restoration, which no doubt led to its sale for the reasonable price of £440. (Sotheby's, Sussex)

pelin killer', mentioned in our last column, realised £99,000 after an estimate in the region of £60,000. The medal, secured by a private English collector, was auctioned by Leefe Robinson's niece to raise money for a children's leukemia charity.

December promises to be a busy and expensive month for the trade, since Sotheby's, Phillips and Christie's all have sales early in the month. All have some promising lots, ranging from cased Mauser self-loading pistols to some Napoleonic relics from St. Helena.

Frederick Wilkinson

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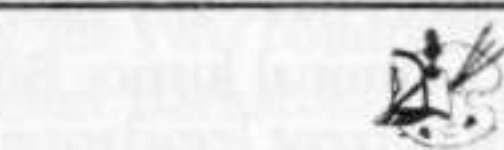
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# The Confederate Infantryman at Antietam, 1862

ROSS M. KIMMEL

Flushed from a season of hard-won victories, though worn wafer-thin, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia carried the American Civil War into Union territory in September 1862. Crossing the Potomac River early that month, Lee's legions marched peacefully into the undefended farm community of Frederick in central Maryland, where he hoped to find recruits and logistic support from among the local citizenry. He was to find that he had overestimated their devotion to the Southern cause; frustrated on both accounts, he decamped after several days and moved westward. Contemporary writings suggest that his lack of success was due at least in part to the shockingly worn appearance of his army – the army which was shortly to fight on the bloodiest single day in American military history, at Antietam Creek on 17 September 1862.

The stakes were high for the Confederacy. A successful military demonstration on Union soil could pay important dividends: it might bring direct military aid from Great Britain – and better yet, it might deliver the *coup-de-grace* to flagging popular support for the war in the North. A key to Lee's lack of success in wooing the people of central Maryland to his cause is provided by the following interview excerpt from the 12 September 1862 issue of the *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*:

*The Confederate infantryman, as his government envisioned him. (Uniform and Dress of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States, 1861)*

## Right:

*The Confederate infantryman, as he actually was. This sketch by noted artist (and Army of Northern Virginia veteran) Allen C. Redwood appeared in the Second Manassas section of the authoritative Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. Tied to his blanket roll is a small cook-pot, as noted by Mrs. Davis. This waistlength 'roundabout' or shell jacket, though unauthorised, was the most common type of Confederate coat. His trousers are tucked into his stockings to discourage the upward migration of 'critters'.*

## EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY

(Q) 'Did [the Confederates] obtain many recruits in Frederick?

(A) 'Not many in Frederick, but there was about five hundred came in from Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Montgomery and Carroll counties, and some from Baltimore city. After seeing the character of the army and the life which the men led, many of them refused to join. When leaving myself I met six young men from Carroll country, and piloted them to Westminster. They acknowledged that they had been to Frederick to join the army, but after "seeing and smelling" it, had concluded to return home. They begged me not to give their names.

(Q) 'What did they mean by smelling it?

(A) 'They meant exactly what they said. I have never seen a mass of such filthy strong-smelling men. Three of them in a room would make it unbearable, and when marching in column along the street the smell from them was most offensive . . . The filth that pervades them is most remarkable. Their sympath-

izers at Frederick have been greatly disappointed in the character of the army, and most of them are now as anxious for them to disappear as they were for them to come . . . They have no uniforms, but are all well armed and equipped, and have become so inured to hardships that they care but little for any of the comforts of civilization.

(Q) 'What was the general appearance of the Rebel soldiers?

(A) 'They were the roughest looking set of creatures I ever saw, their features, hair, and clothing matted with dirt and filth, and the scratching they kept up gave warrant of vermin in abundance . . .'

Another observer described the Confederates as 'a lean and hungry set of wolves.'<sup>(1)</sup> And when Gen. James Longstreet's corps marched through the hamlet of Funkstown, Angela Kirk-

ham Davis, wife of a local merchant, watched the procession with quiet awe. Despite her Unionist sympathies, she gave fresh well water to the parched Southerners as they passed her door. She described them as:

' . . . A poor forlorn looking set of men who certainly had seen hard service. They were tired, dirty, ragged and had no uniforms whatever. Their coats were made out of almost anything that you could imagine, butternut color predominating. Their hats looked worse than those worn by the darkies. Many were barefooted; some with toes sticking out of their shoes and others in the[ir] stocking feet. Their blankets were every kind of description, consisting of druggie, rugs, bedclothes, in fact anything they could get, put up in a long roll and tied at the ends, which with their cooking utensils, were slung over





their shoulders.'<sup>(2)</sup>

Meanwhile, as the other wing of Lee's army, the corps of 'Stonewall' Jackson, converged to pounce on the hapless Federal garrison at Harpers Ferry, Mary Bedinger Mitchell, a lady of Southern sympathies, witnessed stragglers of Jackson's command pass through Sheperdstown, Virginia (now West Virginia); her description is poignant in the extreme:

'... Early in the morning, we found ourselves surrounded by a hungry horde of lean and dusty tatterdemalions [sic], who seemed to rise from the ground at our feet ... haggard apparitions ... When I say they were hungry, I convey no impression of the gaunt starvation that looked from their cavernous eyes ... I saw the troops march past us every summer for four years and I know something of the appearance of a marching army, both Union and Southern ... but never before or after did I see anything comparable to the demoralized state of the Confederates at this time.'<sup>(3)</sup>

Among Jackson's 'lean and dusty tatterdemalions' was Sgt. Thomas Taylor, 8th Louisiana Infantry, now a seasoned veteran of 14 months' active service. As a fresh-faced and well-equipped private he had had his portrait taken upon enlisting the year before. His image is well-known to browsers through Civil War picture books, for it has been published many times. Taylor survived Jackson's successful siege of Harpers Ferry unscathed, but would have a rendezvous with destiny a few days later near the banks of Antietam Creek.

### HARD CAMPAIGNS

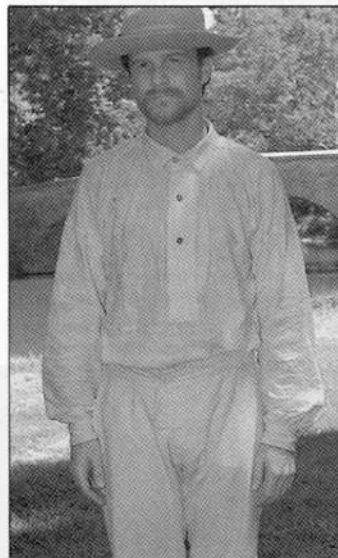
The accounts of Mrs. Davis and Mrs. Mitchell and of the anonymous interviewee in the *Baltimore* newspaper confirm the general impression of historians that Lee's army was, at the time of the Antietam campaign, in as bad a condition as it was at any point during the Civil



War. As Mrs. Mitchell alluded, the spring and summer of 1862 had been seasons of hard fighting for the Confederates.

Jackson's command had confounded three small Federal armies in the Shenandoah Valley that spring, while Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army blunted a thrust at Richmond by Gen. George B. McClellan. After Johnston was severely wounded Lee took over command of the Confederate force which would ever afterwards be revered as the Army of Northern Virginia; joined by Jackson, he drove McClellan out of the York Peninsula in June and July. Jackson went on to defeat an army under Gen. Nathaniel Banks at Cedar Mountain in early August; and later that month fell on Gen. John Pope at Groveton, in a battle which broadened into Second Manassas when Lee arrived next day with Longstreet's corps. Shortly thereafter the Yankees were beaten again at Chantilly, near Washington. Convinced that the time had come to carry the war into the territory of the invader, Lee made his fateful crossing of the Potomac on 2 September.

Moving westward after failing to rally the people of Frederick to his cause, Lee,



confident of McClellan's usual languor, divided his army into several commands and sent them off in different directions with different missions. When Mrs. Davis saw Longstreet's corps it was heading for Hagerstown in search of badly-needed provisions. When Mrs. Mitchell saw Jackson's corps it was on its way to neutralize the Union garrison at Harpers Ferry. Shortly afterwards the elements of Lee's army would reassemble in and about the Maryland village of Sharpsburg to face McClellan. By the end of the fighting along Antietam Creek on 17 September, some 13,700 of Lee's less than 50,000 effectives would have fallen; and

Another *Redwood* sketch in *Battles and Leaders* ... shows a fainthearted Rebel undertaking his own countermarch. Over the white canvas Confederate haversack he wears a captured US canteen: one former Confederate recalled that Army of Northern Virginia veterans were distinguishable from recruits by the superior Federal canteens which they had been able to pick up. The shoulder strap detail suggests that this man wears a US knapsack in addition to his blanket roll. Note, again, the cook-pot. The weapon is the US model 1842 smooth-bore percussion musket.

The officer wears a seasoned-looking regulation uniform of kepi and frock coat; even by the time of Antietam many company officers were adopting the plainer jackets and trousers of enlisted men.

### Below:

This shirt, based on a North Carolina state issue original, is typical of those worn by both armies. Shirts were then in a state of transition between loose, untailored 18th-century styles and the fitted styles of the 20th century. Body and sleeves are cut of rectangles, and fit is achieved by means of gussets in the armpits and at the neckhole, as in earlier years. But the neckhole itself is oval, and is not gathered into the collar - features typical of modern shirts. The buttoned placket front is another modern step, away from the mere slit seen formerly. This shirt is hand-sewn of cotton sheeting. The drawers, also copied from surviving N. Carolina state originals and of hand-sewn cotton, are cut in a simplified trouser pattern without outside leg seams or pockets and with a simplified fly; there are rear ties to adjust fit at the waist. Drawers were common issue items in the Confederate armies.

with them, about 12,400 of McClellan's 70,000-odd deployed Federal troops. There has never been another day on which more than 26,000 American soldiers fell.

### THE UNIFORMS

The ragged and non-uniform appearance of the Rebels reflected their disjointed system of supply. The previous year the Confederate Congress had established uniform regulations for its soldiers. Infantrymen were to wear a sky-blue kepi with dark blue band; a cadet-grey double-breasted frock coat trimmed in sky-blue; and sky-blue trousers. If any such uniform was ever manufactured and issued, no record of it has sur-



Lee's hungry troops ate raw corn (maize) snatched from the fields they passed on their way to Antietam. This Redwood study is interesting in showing a slit at the trouser cuff, probably indicating captured Federal sky-blue trousers: the slit was universal in Federal military trousers, but the author has never encountered it in Confederate examples or civilian styles. One source states that the unofficial uniform of Lee's army was butternut jackets and captured Union trousers.

#### Below:

Alexander Gardner photographed these dead Confederates on the west side of the Hagerstown Pike on 19 September, two days after the battle. The foreground figure may possibly be barefoot, but at least two others are shod. While the clothing is plain and unadorned, none of it looks tattered. At the foot of the fence can be seen a blanket roll and slouch hat. (Library of Congress)

vived. The exigencies of war and an imperfect quartermaster system resulted in a miscellany of make-do Confederate clothing styles.

At the time of Antietam, many Confederate units still operated under the 'commutation' system of clothing supply. Each company commander was responsible for clothing his men himself from whatever sources he



could find, applying to the government for subsequent reimbursement. Moreover, the several Confederate state authorities took various different measures to clothe their men; private citizens took up donations; and the Confederate government established the rudiments of regional quartermaster departments – though at this date the latter could only supply the troops in direst need. By its very nature the system assured non-conformity at best, and total inadequacy at worst. Many soldiers had to – as they put it – 'root, hog or die', supplying themselves as best they could. The results were the spectacles recorded by our eyewitnesses.

It is therefore impossible to illustrate the uniform of the Confederate infantryman at Antietam, since there simply was no standard uniform. Of the handful of original Confederate military garments to have survived, none can positively be said to have seen service at Antietam. While numerous studio portrait photographs of Lee's soldiers exist, it is extremely problematic to identify those subjects, if any, who are shown wearing their 'Antietam uniforms'. It is unlikely, for instance, that Thomas Taylor still wore at Antietam the uniform which he sported for his portrait a year earlier. A North Carolina soldier testified later that a soldier 'rubbed out' a jacket in two or three months, a pair of trousers in one.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### Photographic evidence

Apart from the eyewitness descriptions, we do have a small number of photographs – one taken before the battle, others recording its horrific aftermath – to help us reconstruct a Confederate foot-soldier. That taken before the battle is, in the present writer's view, the rarest

image to have survived from the Civil War.

Taken from a second-storey window in Frederick, it shows a column of Southern infantry halted in line of march in the street below. It is the only photograph known to the author showing a formed body of veteran Confederate troops under arms, on campaign. Confederates marched through Frederick twice during the war: once just before Antietam, and again in 1864 when Gen. Jubal Early flanked Washington in an attempt to divert Grant from Richmond. Most authorities have assumed that the photograph was taken in 1862; in either case, it records a spectacle that squares with our 1862 eyewitness accounts. Blurred enough to frustrate the keen-eyed observer, it does clearly show troops with a variety of hats, clothing and bedrolls.

The other photographic source is Alexander Gardner's images of the Antietam dead. Arriving on the battlefield before the fighting ended, Gardner was the first photographer ever to record the aftermath of a battle involving American





troops. He photographed the Southern dead as he found them, and clothing details are therefore not displayed to best advantage. It is nonetheless possible to discern plain, unadorned short jackets, nondescript trousers and battered felt slouch hats. Both blanket rolls and knapsacks are evident. Interestingly, none of the dead appear to be dressed in rags, and most seem to be adequately shod.<sup>(5)</sup>

### 'Butternut'

As to the colour of the clothing, we can infer that it was predominantly of various shades of brown, or 'butternut'. Mrs. Davis described it as such; and a Yankee who saw dead North Carolinians of Longstreet's corps on the slopes of South Mountain, where an action was fought three days before Antietam, described them as 'clad in "butternut" – a colour running all the way from deep coffee brown up to the whitish brown of ordinary dust.'<sup>(6)</sup> This same informant was captured at Antietam and taken into Virginia, where he saw a freshly-recruited and -clothed battalion of Marylanders who had gone south before the battle, but had not been engaged. He was struck by the Marylanders' grey

clothing, because all the other Confederates he had seen had 'assumed a sort of revised regulation uniform of homespun butternut.'<sup>(7)</sup>

The origin and hue of 'butternut' has been hotly debated by recent students of Confederate military clothing. For years historians assumed that it was the result of homespun cloth dyed with walnut ('butternut') hulls. Doubtless that was true of much contemporary home-made Southern clothing, and of some Confederate uniforms. But inspection of a number of surviving military garments now of a brown colour reveals that the cloth was factory-made, not hand-loomed; and thus presumably factory-dyed, though probably with vegetable dyes. Recent experiments conducted at the University of North Carolina have shown that woollen and woollen-cotton cloth which has been vegetable-dyed a grey colour turns brown after a few weeks' exposure to sunlight. So, no matter what colour Confederate clothing may have been when new, contemporary eyewitnesses and modern experiments show that it was butternut when in use; and we have contemporary testimony that 'butternut' meant brown.

### Captions to colour plates overleaf:

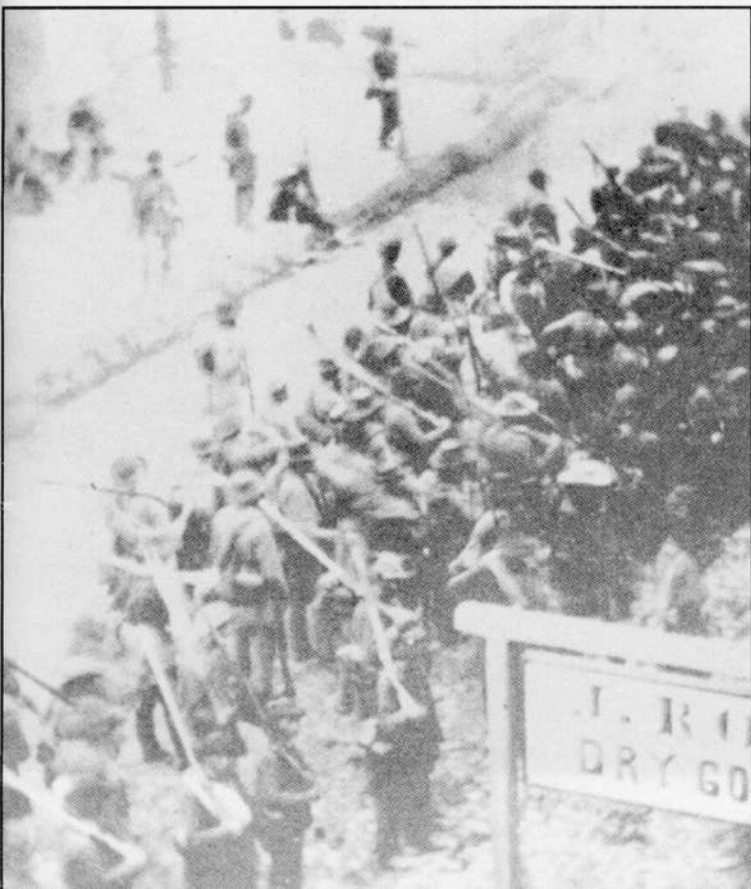
- (1) The surviving jacket which belonged to Sgt. Thomas Taylor, 8th Louisiana. It could be – but probably is not – the one he wore at Antietam: we cannot tell. In any case, it is a fine example of a Confederate 'roundabout' jacket of jeans cloth, now of a butternut shade. Note the narrow, originally black braid used to trim collar and cuffs, and for the triple chevrons of rank.
- (2) This relic sleeve of jeans cloth displayed at the Antietam National Battlefield museum is said to have come from the jacket of a Confederate soldier named Robinson. Detective work allows a tentative identification to a 20-year-old Mississippi corporal serving with the cavalry of the Jeff Davis Legion; John Robinson was wounded in the upper left arm at Catoctin Mountain on 13 September 1862. The sleeve is of jeans, made in a tabby weave, which is somewhat unusual: most jeans was of 2/1 or 3/1 twill. The warp yarn is white cotton, the fill yarn a dark brown wool. The overall effect is what 19th-century Americans would have called 'butternut'. The lining is a coarse white tabby weave cotton; and the entire sleeve is hand-stitched.
- (3) This model, posed in front of the famous Dunker Church at Antietam, wears a suit of butternut jeans reproduced from the Robinson relic sleeve. Aside from his brass military buttons there is little about his clothing that conforms to the mid-19th century idea of military uniform. Notice how, from a distance, the brown and white yarns of the cloth blend to create a drab effect: '... the whitish brown of ordinary dust.'
- (4)–(8) Our model wears reproduction clothing and equipment illustrative of the Antietam period; he poses in front of a familiar Antietam landmark, the Burnside Bridge.
- (4) Wearing a shirt, vest, and butternut jeans trousers held up by braces. Though neither army issued vests, nor required them in their regulations, soldiers frequently wore them, often of a military cut – buttoned to the throat, with standing collar. Confederate examples were often civilian types, however, as here. Trousers had generally achieved their modern proportions by the time of the Civil War, though they tended to be higher in the waist and fuller in the seat.
- (5) A reproduction of Taylor's jacket minus chevrons. The shell jacket was the most common coat style among Confederate troops, and came in many variations, which might or might not include shoulder straps, belt loops, exterior pockets, padding in the chest, cuff vents and/or buttons, contrasting collar and/or cuff facings, and decorative piping or welting. Buttons varied in number between four and 12 and were usually of some brass military style (often state seal, or captured US Army), but civilian types were not uncommon. Jacket and trousers are hand-sewn, sewing machines being scarce in the South, especially among the female pieceworkers who sewed garments cut by government tailors at regional quartermaster depots.
- (6) Basic combat equipment and weapon: an English cartridge box on a local tarred-canvas sling; an English cap pouch, to the right of the non-military frame buckle of the leather waistbelt; and an English model 1853 Enfield rifle-musket with socket bayonet.
- (7) This shows the rear of jacket and trousers; note the fullness of the seat, and the buckled adjustment tabs just visible under the edge of the jacket.
- (8) Full marching order; see accompanying rear view for details.

### Our reconstruction

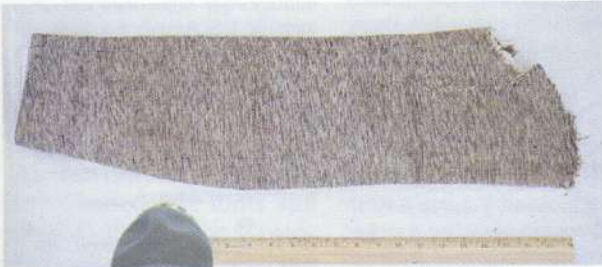
Despite the scanty evidence, it is nevertheless possible to reconstruct hypothetical clothing and equipage typical of a Confederate infantry private's kit at the time of Antietam. Sufficient numbers of contemporary garments survive to permit a comprehensive study of the cloth types, pattern and tailoring concepts, and construction details which prevailed at the time. Our resultant reconstruction, if not a literal duplicate of any one Antietam soldier's kit, would permit our modern model, trans-

Confederate troops in Frederick, Md., either shortly before Antietam or conceivably during Jubal Early's 1864 campaign. The image, though blurred, fits 1862 eyewitness descriptions. The variety of hats is evident. One man, roughly at '10 o'clock' to the corner of J. Rosen's store sign, appears to wear the US Army black felt dress hat. If so, this might tend to support a date of 1862: a few weeks earlier Jackson's troops had shot the Union 'Iron Brigade' to pieces at Groveton, and this formation was famous for wearing the dress hat. Though these soldiers probably wear Confederate military clothing, it is certainly not what a mid-19th century American, accustomed to fanciful militia outfits of the period, would recognise as 'uniforms' – hence comments like that of Mrs. Davis, that they 'had no uniforms whatever'.

continued on page 14













**Right:**

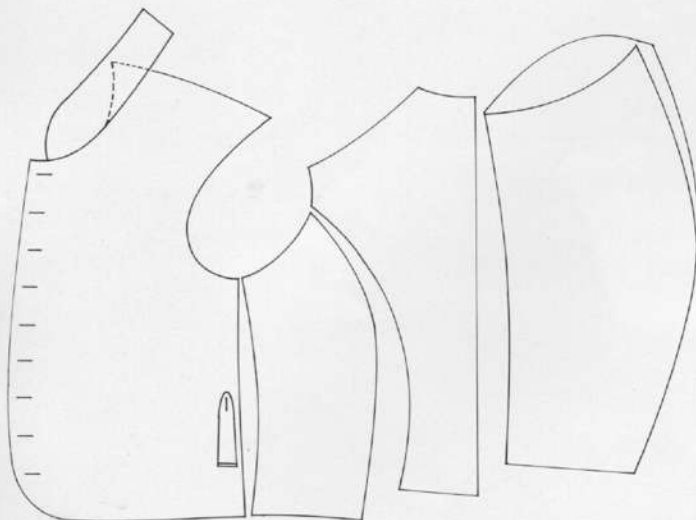
Thomas Taylor, as he appeared upon enlistment in the 8th Louisiana Infantry in June 1861. His felt slouch hat, trimmed military jacket and trousers, and nearly complete set of field equipment (though he seems to lack a haversack and bayonet scabbard) represent the ideal outfit for the Confederate infantryman. The rifle is the US model 1855, with a peculiar trapdoor mechanism for the Maynard tape primer. His cartridge box is English. Notice the sheath knife stuck under his belt – perhaps a photographer's prop, though such knives were common among Confederates early in the war; and the open frame belt buckle. The broad cuff trim shows that this is not Taylor's surviving jacket, illustrated on our colour pages.

It is doubtful that Taylor still had this uniform 13 months later at Antietam; his service record shows him to have participated in all the Army of Northern Virginia's campaigns from the Peninsula to Antietam. He earned his sergeancy late

in 1861; and his active campaigning would end on 17 September 1862. Hay's Louisiana Brigade spent only 15 or 20 minutes in battle, just south of David Miller's cornfield, but under an enemy fire so withering that the brigade suffered 50 per cent casualties. Taylor was hit in the knee, and captured. Though exchanged after eight months, he was crippled, and is believed to have spent the rest of the war as an army clerk in Montgomery, Alabama. (Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy)

**Below:**

Cutting diagram for the surviving Thomas Taylor jacket, showing fundamental differences from a modern six-part military coat. The shoulder seam rides the shoulder blade, not the shoulder. The armhole rides tighter on top of the shoulder and in the armpit. The cap of the sleeve and the scoop of the undersleeve are far shallower than is the case today. The finished garment has a completely different appearance from a modern jacket.



ported back in time, to move unnoticed through the ranks of Lee's infantry at Antietam.

Our model wears a battered felt slouch hat, the unofficial trademark of the Confederate soldier; possibly an issue item, it is more likely to be something which he acquired personally. His outer clothing is of butternut jeans cloth, the most commonly encountered cloth type for early-war Confederate clothing. Jeans was a cotton warp, woollen fill cloth, usually twill, popular throughout the South and the Old North-West in the antebellum period. Cheap and durable, it was favoured among farmers and labourers, and was readily adopted in the Southern

army. The reconstructed jacket is patterned after one which Thomas Taylor of the 8th Louisiana may have worn at Antietam.

The model's trousers are a composite of several surviving examples. His shirt is a reproduction of one issued to a Maryland soldier from North Carolina stores late in the war, and is similar to those issued in both armies throughout the conflict. His shoes, stockings, underdrawers, equipage and weapon are all reproduced from surviving examples which would not have been out of place at Antietam.

No doubt many Confederates wore civilian clothing in 1862; however, we should beware of taking our eyewit-





nesses' assertions that 'they have no uniforms' too literally. Many of the men probably wore some sort of Confederate military clothing, but made of nondescript jeans cloth and lacking any military trim, so that to casual observers of the 1860s it did not resemble the uniforms which they were used to seeing on pre-war hometown volunteer militia companies.

Thus clothed and equipped, the small, indifferently-supplied Army of Northern Virginia narrowly evaded what should have been a crushing defeat by an army twice as large, well fed and supplied, on the banks of the Antietam. Similarly turned out, Lee's army would go on dismaying the much larger, better-equipped, but less competently led Army of the Potomac for another two and

a half years. It would seem that as clothing doth not make the man, neither does a uniform make the soldier. **M**

#### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the following for their assistance in the preparation of this article: Dennis Frye, Paul Chiles and William L. Brown III of the US National Park Service; Michael P. Musick of the US National Archives; Les Jensen of the Old Guard Museum; Mary Kimmel, Stu Whalen, Betty Otto, and Pat James.

#### Notes

- (1) Quoted in Ronald H. Bailey, *The Bloodiest Day: The Battle of Antietam* (Time-Life Books; Alexandria, Va, 1984) p.19.
- (2) 'The Journal of Angela Kirkham Davis', unpublished MS, privately owned.
- (3) Mary Bedinger Mitchell, 'A Woman's Recollections of Antietam', in Clarence C. Buel & Robert U. Johnson, eds. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (4 vols.; New York, 1888; rpt. Thomas Yoseloff; New York, 1956) Vol.II, pp. 687-688.
- (4) J. F. J. Caldwell of Co. B, 1st Regt. S. Carolina Volunteers, *The History*

of a Brigade of South Carolinians (Morningside Press; Dayton, OH, 1984) p. 105.

(5) The authoritative work on the photographs of Antietam is William A. Frassanito, *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day* (Chas. Scribner's Sons; New York, 1978).

(6) David L. Thompson of Co. G, 9th NY Volunteers, 'In the Ranks to the Antietam', in *Battles and Leaders* . . . , Vol.II, p.558.

(7) Thompson, 'With Burnside at Antietam', in *Battles and Leaders* . . . , Vol.II, p.662.

Rear view of our reconstructed soldier in full marching order. On his right hip is an English cartridge box, identical to the one worn by Thomas Taylor in his portrait, on a Confederate tarred canvas sling. On the left hip is a Confederate cotton canvas haversack, and wooden canteen. The blanket roll and attached cooking utensils are worn over an English knapsack made by the firm of Isaacs & Campbell, with a rubberised poncho rolled on top of it.

### REPRODUCING CIVIL WAR CLOTHING

Civil War re-enactment is a fast-growing participation sport in America (and elsewhere, judging by the polyglot chatter overheard at the 1988 125th anniversary re-enactment of Gettysburg). One of the re-enactor's biggest problems is procuring accurate reproduction clothing. Many of the products on the market, represented by their manufacturers as accurate, reveal to the practised eye a surfeit of modern fabrics, colours, patterns and sewing techniques.

A weaver and tailor from Rogers, Ohio, Charles R. Childs - our model in the accompanying photographs - has elevated the inexact art of Civil War uniform reproduction to a far more precise science. He starts from scratch, producing his own cloth and making his own patterns, meticulously copying both from original garments.

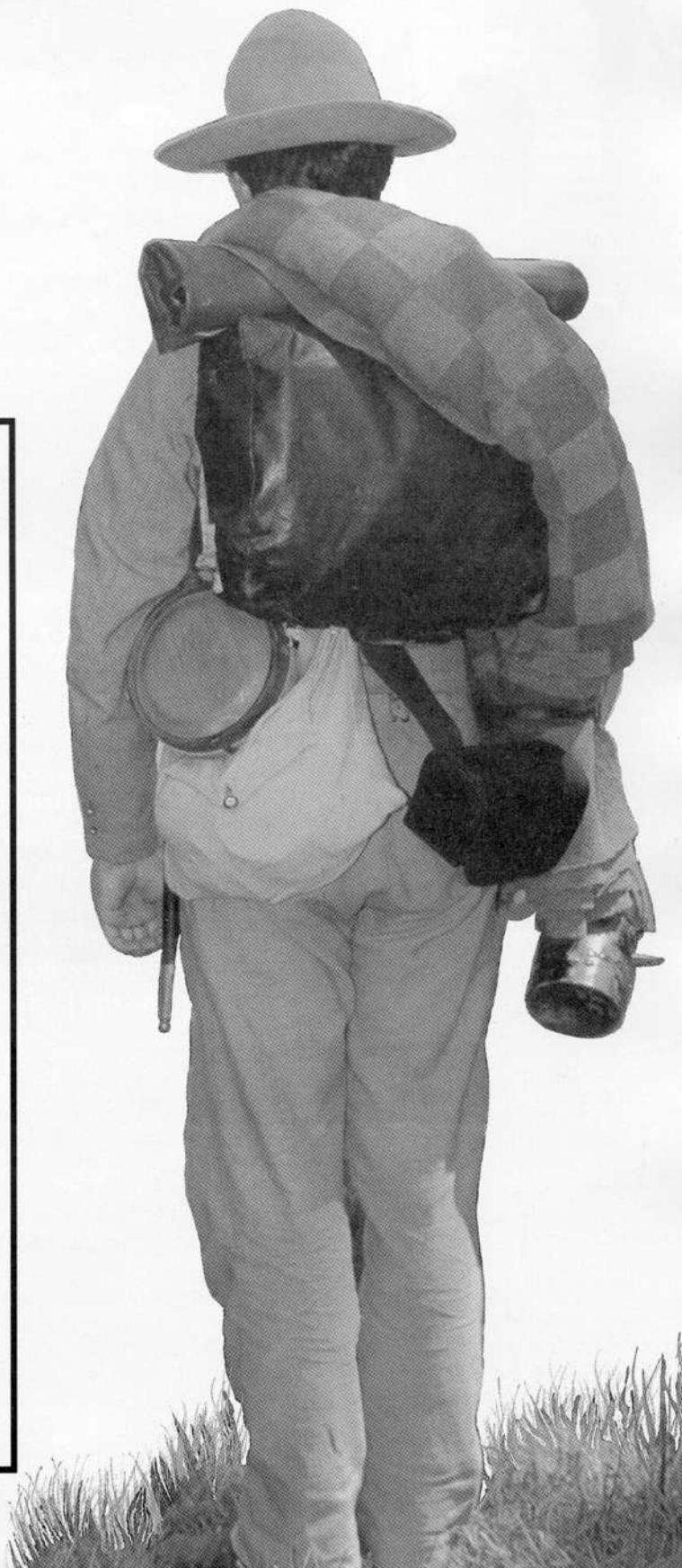
Childs began his career as a pattern drafter and grader, and later as a production supervisor, in the modern clothing industry. Interested in Civil War uniforms, he began to study originals in museums and private collections; and soon noticed that there were some very fundamental differences between modern cloth, tailoring and sewing techniques and those of the Civil War.

Study of surviving Confederate garments showed that most were made of one of two kinds of combination cotton and woollen cloth, neither of them produced any more. One, jeans, was a common, cheap cloth which saw widespread use throughout America before the

Civil War. Rather more refined was satinete, a fabric woven in such a way as to hide the cotton in the cloth face - a sort of 'poor man's broadcloth'. Childs discovered that later in the war the Confederacy began to import large quantities of blue-grey kersey, a pure woollen twill from Europe. He has successfully reproduced jeans and kersey, and hopes to attack satinete soon.

He also observed that Confederate clothing was tailored in ways totally foreign to modern trained cutters. Shoulder seams were on the shoulder blade, not the shoulder. Armholes were about one-third the measure of the breast, rather than a half. Padding, when used, was put in the chest for a round-breasted look, rather than in the shoulders for the broad-shouldered look favoured today. He also noted that most items were entirely hand-stitched, with many little tricks used to conserve labour in ways no longer necessary in the age of the sewing machine.

Childs realised that to achieve museum-quality reproductions required that he make his own cloth, cut his garments according to 19th-century tailoring concepts, and do at least all top stitching by hand. All of these he has achieved in a commendably workmanlike manner; and he now has a thriving business supplying Confederate and Union uniforms to re-enactors. More recently, museums have recognised the authenticity of his work and are ordering it for display in place of the nearly unobtainable original pieces.







## Re-enactment: Le Puy-en-Velay 1500-1988

In mid-September 1988 a group of some 45 British and Swiss medieval and Renaissance re-enactment and 'living history' enthusiasts took part, for the second year running, in the festival of *Le Roi d'Oiseaux* at the charming medieval town of Le Puy-en-Velay, Haute Loire, in the rolling countryside of southern central France. 'MI' was in the thick of it.



The festival centres on a recent revival of a 16th-century archery competition, imaginatively exploited by the town's mayor, local authorities and chamber of commerce. It includes many artistic, community and sporting events and spectacles, culminating on the final Saturday in a programme which draws thousands of costumed revellers into the streets in a carnival atmosphere.

Sheep are spit-roasted in the streets; the bars stay open until the small hours; and by this stage of a week of festivities the presence in the crowds of gently reeling knots of unwashed medieval soldiery in grimy doublets

and rust-specked armour, carousing in guttural foreign dialects, attracts few stares – often, grins and the offer of a bottle.

The British and Swiss volunteers officially form *La Compagnie Mercenaire du Puy*: a pleasant fiction based on the pretence that the medieval town has hired a mercenary company to help provide security during the festival. This pretence is pursued with enthusiasm, and the company is sworn in during an impressive municipal ceremony. Through the kindness of the Company's captain (regular 'MI' contributor Gerry Embleton) we were able to take part in this year's tour of duty.

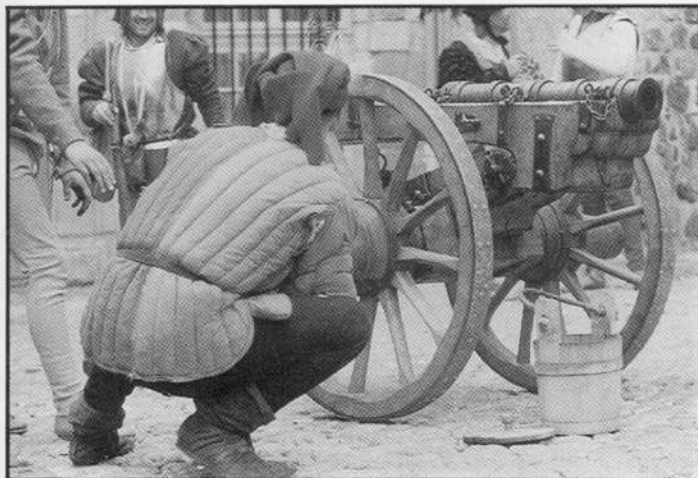
### 'STREET THEATRE'

The group's visit, which is to some extent subsidised by the town but which involves a good deal of personal expense and dedication, has a number of objects. Firstly, on a site within the medieval Old Town (from which vehicles are barred for much of the week) the men, women and children of the group recreate an authentic military tented camp of c.1500; all modern objects are forbidden, and a remarkably convincing illusion is achieved. Many of the younger and hardier volunteers lived and slept in camp throughout the week; and most of the time the group ate meals cooked over the campfire from authentic – or at least, not anachronistic – ingredients. There was a constant stream of fascinated visitors to this camp, and for part of each day parties were conducted around the tents and work areas. French TV crews became a commonplace hazard, manhandling their equipment through a maze of guy-ropes. The

group organised guided tours for parties of schoolchildren; several hundred of them visited the camp during the week, and they and their teachers were impressed and enthusiastic. (Their behaviour, while lively, was

#### Below|left:

One of the two accurate replica cannon provided by The Company of St. George. These were a major attraction: with even the quite modest 50-100g (1¾-3½oz.) black powder charges dictated by the need for safety in the streets, and heavy wadding, they made a thunderous report. (The wadding was to all appearances made from pages torn from 15th-century Bibles – a touch which may have startled onlookers who picked up the smouldering remains.) On one or two occasions when a demonstration of firepower seemed advisable charges of 150g (5¼oz.) were used; the guns were seen to recoil smartly, despite their weight of around 300kg (660lb.). The effect was even more impressive after dark and in confined spaces. Removable breeches allowed a fairly rapid rate of fire, which was useful during one unscripted night attack on the mercenary camp when 'MI' swabbed for a distinctly 'scratch' team of gunners obliged at a moment's notice to serve both cannon simultaneously. All survived, though deafened and mildly singed.



#### Left:

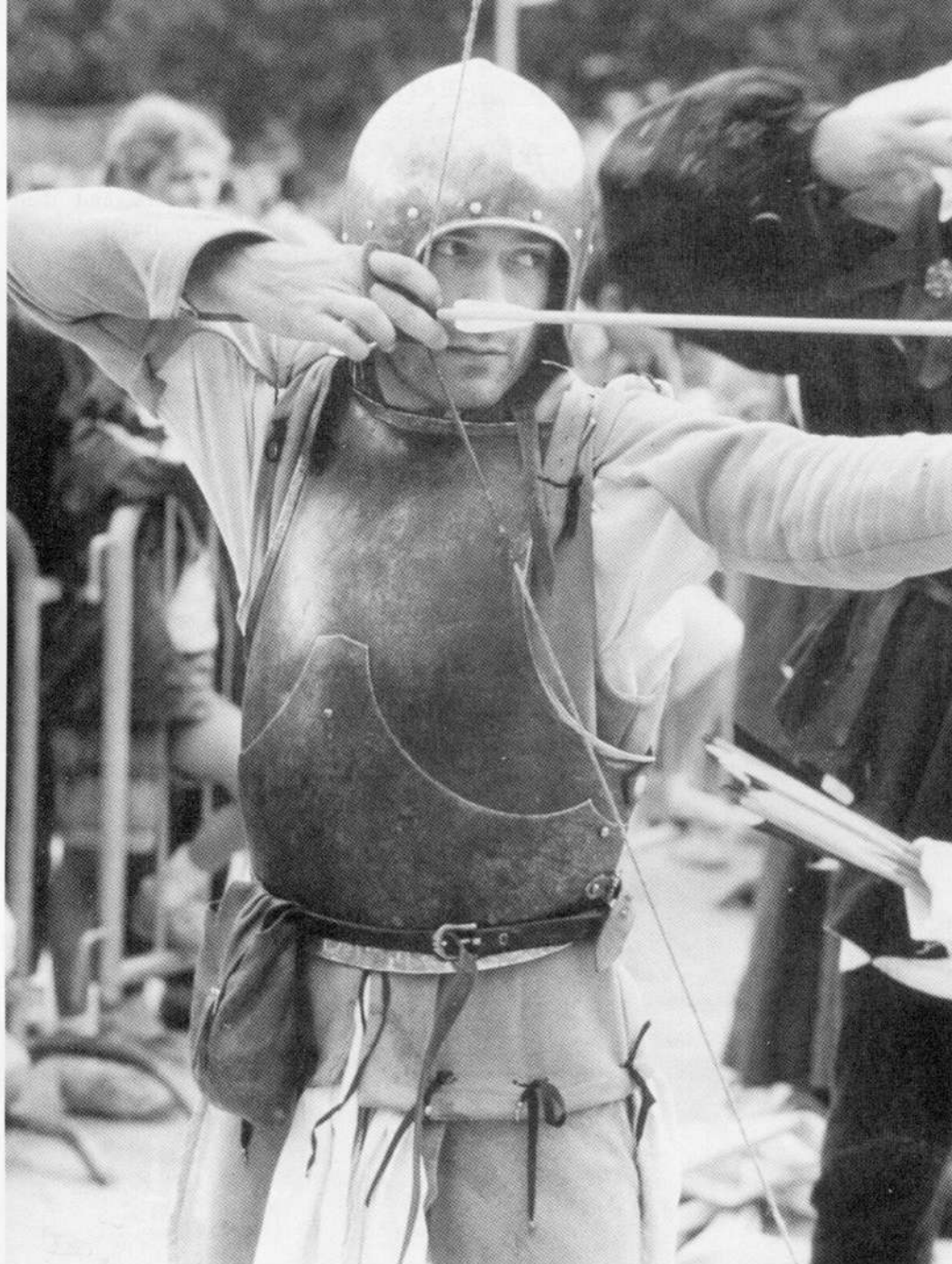
The genuinely menacing appearance of a halberd squad engaged in one of the skirmishes which enlivened the 'King of the Birds' festival at Le Puy is not entirely play-acting: Master Victor Shreeve, who memorably doubled as Provost and Leech to the Mercenary Company, dealt with a number of minor wounds during the week-long programme. (All photographs, John Howe © Time Machine)

#### Right:

The degree of authenticity achieved on the camp site was remarkable, given the resources available and the fact that all clothing, equipment and tentage had to be brought from England and Switzerland. Camp life had its marvellous moments, and its grim ones – last year's temperatures in the high 90's F were not repeated, and for three days it rained fairly constantly. The camp-followers' success in keeping the troops supplied with hot rations under these depressing conditions was beyond praise. Their service as cantinières was also essential; they faithfully kept up with the march, dispensing water by day and a range of more interesting local liquids after dark.







A longbowman from The White Company's Royal Household demonstrates his skill to the crowds. Considering that they came up in competition against a local archery club equipped with the most modern high-technology bows, the archers performed impressively. This well-costumed bowman is either Wart or Fungus Perry: 'MI' never did manage to tell these identical twins apart, especially after they had lived for a few days in an archers' tent of cheerful but unparalleled squalor.

impeccable: French children seem to be taught respect for other people's property.)

Various displays were mounted in and around the site, ranging from handicrafts and domestic routines, through drills and exercises of skill-at-arms, to drunken brawls over women: summary

justice; the caging of malefactors and defaulters (who were enthusiastically pelted with filth); minor but alarming surgery; and, on one occasion, an impromptu 'halberd dance' which will remain indelibly etched on the memories of all present . . .

Secondly, the group provides troops for official processions, street-liners for municipal events, and set-piece military demonstrations as part of various official arena shows. Since the Company includes a skilled halberd squad, some fine longbowmen equipped with traditional weapons (and also with blunt-tipped arrows which can be shot at living targets), and two working

replicas of late 15th-century cannon, these displays were vivid, noisy, and popular with the crowds. This part of the programme reached its climax in a full-scale mock battle in open countryside on the final Sunday.

Thirdly, and for many of the group most enjoyably of all, the authorities encourage the mercenaries to skulk by night round the dark labyrinth of alleys, courtyards, steps and archways which make up the medieval quarter, confronting startled bystanders with what are officially called 'animations'. These are unscripted skirmishes between quite large groups of armed and armoured men; and the gulf

between British and French attitudes could not be more clearly demonstrated than in the relaxed tolerance shown by police and local authorities towards this loud, mildly dangerous, and immensely exciting game. There is little point in denying that 'MI' regressed to about 12 years of age as soon as we were initiated into this unusual outdoor sport.

The halberdiers, particularly those from Dan Meakin's squad of The White Company's Gloucester Household, have perfected a form of hand-to-hand fighting which rather resembles ice hockey without the puck. Some degree of armoured protection – and certainly a helmet, padded jack, and gauntlets – is highly advisable, though the rules, ingrained during careful training, prevent any serious injury. To take part in one of these fast, furious 'meeting engagements' in a narrow alleyway, packed with struggling, swearing men half-glimpsed by torchlight in 15th-century war-gear, is an experience calculated to ensure a brisk flow of adrenalin on the chilliest night.

In deference to 'MI's' years and shortness of breath, we were generally invited to join the roving gun-team which enlivened these expeditions, in the capacity of swabber, breech-handler or gunner. We took part in a number of delightful artillery ambushes; and recall with pleasure a particularly cunning position at one end of a masked hairpin ramp, from which we loosed a shocking cannonade on more than one unwary passing squad. The vicarious satisfaction of bloodlust more than made up for the brutal physical labour of man-handling a quarter-ton cannon around the maze of steep, cobbled byways.

#### **THE LESSONS LEARNT**

The participants were drawn from various Households of The White Company, the country-wide British society for the study and re-creation of many aspects of late medieval life; and from the



'Prepare to receive cavalry!' – the mercenaries pack tightly around a cannon in defensive formation: some, rather too tightly for comfort. The final mock battle also involved some local re-enactors; and a group of trick-riders in 'knightly harness', whose appearance caused a growl of agonised frustration to run through the ranks of the Company's long-

bowmen – forbidden, alas, to demonstrate their skills on this occasion.

**Below:**

Captured in fast movement, halberdiers charge forward past one of the cannon, which has just been fired by the captain.





newly-formed Company of St. George based at Grandson in Switzerland. Recruits from Le Puy's own company, closely affiliated to the Company of St. George, also took part. For the duration of the festival, however, all volunteers served individually as members of the Mercenary Company of Le Puy. For practical reasons a slightly relaxed definition of costume was allowed, in order to accommodate re-enactors equipped for the whole period c.1475-1520; but on an individual level the standard of appearance was generally high, and in a number of cases outstanding.

The eight female members of the Company's train of bawds and drabs were splendidly turned out, and worked extremely hard – not only carrying out much of the daily routine of the camp, but playing a full part in all events as *cantinières* and, in the climactic battle, as a replacement gun-crew. Three small boys behaved astonishingly well under sometimes trying circumstances, and were favourites with the crowd.

The whole organisation of the visit was better this year than last, though valuable lessons were still learnt. The improved standard of willing discipline and co-operative effort was noticeable. During the planning stage, letters inviting applicants made clear that nobody need volunteer who was not willing to accept a functioning chain of command and responsibility through officers and 'NCOs'. One of the most impressive things we noticed was the way in which all volunteers turned their hands briskly (and with a minimum of the moaning which is the traditional right of the British soldier) to any job which needed doing. Numbers were too small to allow, for instance, skilled archers to serve full-time as archers; there were several occasions when they had to obey unwelcome orders to lay aside their bows and join the ranks of the halberdiers, just as halberdiers had to provide 'horses' for the gun-teams. It is hardly a

novel discovery to find that in even a mock-military situation, efficiency depends on discipline and training; or that humour and a good-natured willingness to make the best of things increase efficiency and enjoyment all round. We are told that there are many would-be re-enactors who still rely on 'Chinese parliaments' at moments of decision, but that increasing numbers in the better groups are working along brisker lines. From what we saw at Le Puy – especially during the inevitable mid-week slump, when the rain never stopped and the cabbage soup seemed less than exciting – the rewards for all far outweigh the initial pangs of adjustment.

If the lessons learnt this year are remembered, future campaigns promise to be even more enjoyable. 'MI' is grateful to all the mercenaries who made the week so memorable, though they are too many to name individually. (We are also pathetically grateful to the witch for not casting that alarming spell, involving a certain bright blue liquid, in our direction.) Our only regret is that an event like this is scarcely imaginable in a British context. **MI**

#### Contact addresses:

##### The White Company

This large society, dedicated to the study and re-enactment of many aspects of late medieval military and civilian life, is organised in regional 'Households' to which enquiries will be forwarded if sent to:  
Clive Bartlett  
11 West Close  
Arkley, Herts., UK

##### The Company of St. George

is a small, newly-formed group which recruits internationally; it represents an artillery company with halberdiers and camp followers, c.1476. It has tight discipline, and is trying to achieve high levels of accuracy in costume and kit: recruits must have a full and accurate basic costume before they are accepted. The accent is upon 'living history' rather than simply upon combat. Enquiries to:

Gerry Embleton  
The Company of St. George  
Time Machine  
CH-1425 Onnens  
Switzerland

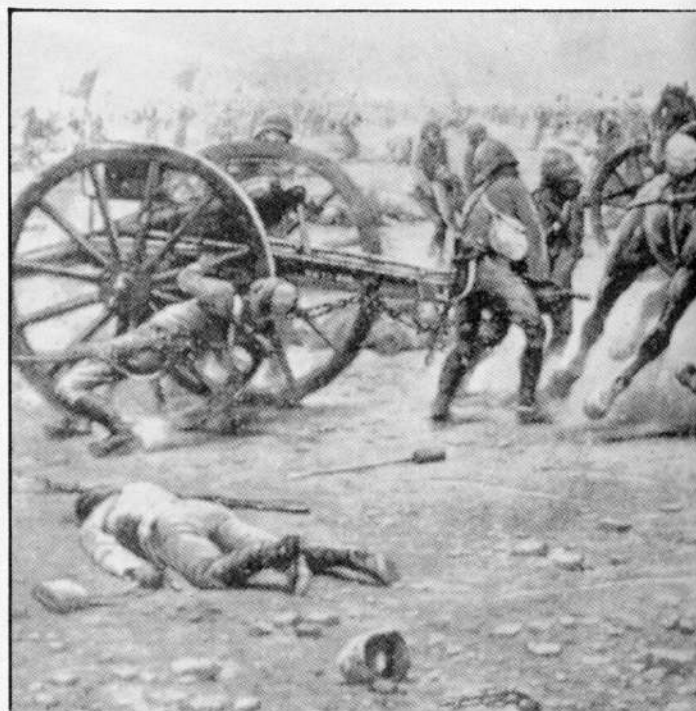
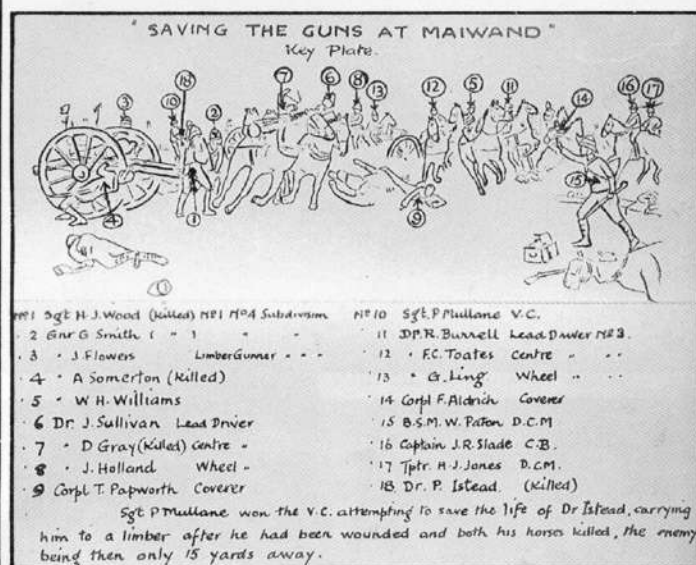
(Self-addressed envelope with stamps or reply coupon in all cases, please.)

# Some Aspects of Maiwand, 1880

MICHAEL BARTHORP

Paintings by PIERRE TURNER

Within a period of only eighteen months the British Army suffered its two worst defeats by 'savage enemies' in the 19th century. The first, on 22 January 1879, was of course the well-known débâcle at Isandlwana. The second, on 27 July 1880, was the destruction of Brig. Gen. Burrow's Anglo-Indian brigade by Ayub Khan's army at Maiwand in the Second Afghan War: an equally dramatic encounter, and arguably of greater significance than Isandlwana, yet one which has received nothing like the attention paid to the battle in Zululand.







The intention here is not to consider the Battle of Maiwand in detail, as comprehensive accounts are available in comparatively recent publications<sup>(1)</sup>; but to comment on certain aspects of it which have received less

attention. However, to put these in context an outline of events is required.

In mid-1880, with British troops preparing to evacuate North Afghanistan after 20 months' hostilities, the precarious settlement achieved

was threatened in the south by another claimant to the Afghan throne, Ayub Khan, advancing from Herat on Kandahar province. Burrows advanced from Kandahar to support the British-appointed Wali but, when the

latter's troops absconded, he moved to Maiwand to cover the approaches to Kandahar and Kabul. There he was confronted by Ayub's army of some 7,900 regulars or semi-regulars with up to as many tribesmen, and 30 guns.

With only 2,500 men and 12 guns, Burrows formed a line on an open plain. Out-gunned and outflanked, with his Indian cavalry reluctant to engage and the collapse of one Indian battalion throwing the other into disorder, Burrows' line disintegrated, leaving the 66th (Berkshire) Regiment and E/B Battery,

#### Above:

Detail from Frank Feller's 'The Last Eleven', an impression of the last stand of the 66th; note the inclusion of the dog 'Bobbie'. (Stipple engraving by C. A. Tompkins: National Army Museum)

#### Left:

Saving the guns at Maiwand: G. D. Giles's painting showing drivers of E/B Battery Royal Horse Artillery wheeling their teams as the gunners prepare to hook in. Compare with key identifying individuals. (National Army Museum)





Royal Horse Artillery to make a fighting withdrawal. E/B fought its guns until almost overrun, losing two of them, and part of the 66th stood and fought until all were killed. In all 969 of the brigade were killed; the remainder, after a harrowing retreat, reached Kandahar.

### PICTORIAL RECORDS

Although it occurred in what might be termed the golden age of British battle painting, Maiwand attracted little interest as a subject, perhaps due to its disastrous outcome. Certainly, for the few artists it did inspire, the gunners proved more popular than the infantry. Probably the best known painting, exhibited two years after the battle, is R. Caton Woodville's spirited representation of E/B Battery's attempt to save its

guns, which includes in the left background some of the 66th and sepoy<sup>(2)</sup>. It was reproduced in several books and periodicals.

The same subject attracted the soldier-artist G. D. Giles (1857-1923). Though possibly less dramatic than Woodville's version, it has, like all Giles's work, an air of authenticity; and it is known that Giles interviewed the battery sergeant-major, Paton; Sgt. Mullane, who was awarded the Victoria Cross; and other men whose likenesses appear in it. This was also reproduced, but its present whereabouts is unknown.

In 1893 J. P. Beadle (1863-1947) also executed a small painting of the withdrawal of the guns<sup>(3)</sup>. Fifteen years after the event Lady Butler<sup>(4)</sup>

exhibited her 'Rescue of wounded, Afghanistan' which shows an officer and trumpeter picking up casualties. Though the artist did not identify this painting with Maiwand, it has been suggested<sup>(5)</sup> that it too depicts E/B battery, possibly because of the guns in the background. However, the uniforms are quite different from those shown by Giles and Woodville, are not consistent with what was worn in Afghanistan and, like the horses' saddlery, are more suggestive of cavalry than horse artillery. As no British cavalry were at Maiwand, the suggestion seems unlikely.

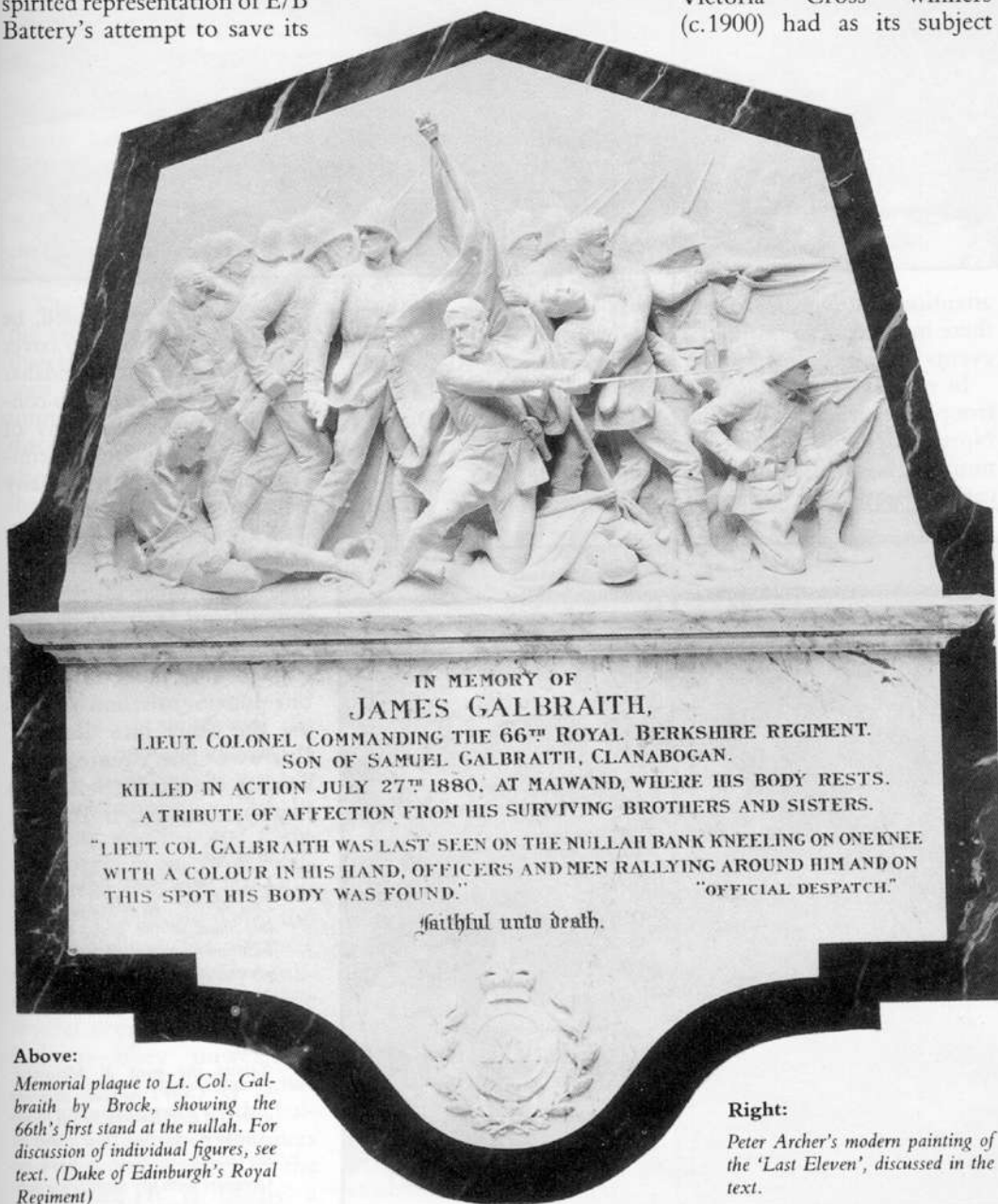
E/B RHA was also commemorated in the cigarette card field. No. 20 of John Players & Sons' 25-card set of Victoria Cross winners (c.1900) had as its subject

Gunner Collis who won the Battery's second VC during the retreat to Kandahar<sup>(6)</sup>. This shows a gun-team with Collis firing at Afghans from the limber; the uniform tallies with those in the Giles/Woodville paintings.

Sgt. Mullane's VC featured in a set of 12 embossed cards, 'Heroes of the Victoria Cross', after Harry Payne (1858-1927) published in 1887. Though possessing some period charm, it is valueless as a record, E/B being portrayed in full dress with foreign service helmets.

### 'The Last Eleven'

The 66th only featured in one near-contemporary painting, by the less well-known artist Frank Feller (1848-1908)<sup>(7)</sup>, whose 1882 painting portrayed the final stand of the 'Last Eleven'; these were, in fact, Lt. Chute and nine men of the 66th and Lt. Hinde of the 1st Bombay Grenadiers.



#### Above:

Memorial plaque to Lt. Col. Galbraith by Brock, showing the 66th's first stand at the nullah. For discussion of individual figures, see text. (Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment)

#### Right:

Peter Archer's modern painting of the 'Last Eleven', discussed in the text.





The painting is obviously based on the despatch, dated Kandahar 1 October 1880, by Lt. Gen. Primrose, commanding the 1st Division, South Afghanistan Field Force, to the Adjutant-General, India. This included the testimony of 'a Colonel of Artillery of Ayub Khan's Army who was present and gave the information to Brig. Gen. Daubeney'<sup>(8)</sup> to the effect that a 100-strong party of the 66th 'made a most determined stand in the garden . . . they were surrounded by the whole Afghan Army and fought on until only eleven men were left, inflicting enormous loss on the enemy. These eleven charged out of the garden and died with their faces to the foe fighting to the death. Such was the nature of their charge and the grandeur of their bearing that, although the whole of the Ghazis<sup>(9)</sup> were assembled around them, not

one dared approach to cut them down. Thus standing in the open, back to back, firing steadily and truly, every shot telling, surrounded by thousands, these eleven officers and men died and it was not until the last man had been shot down that the Ghazis dared advance upon them'. Primrose added that, from the later examination of the ground, corroborative evidence, and the positions in which the bodies were found, he had 'not the least hesitation in stating that this account was true'.

Feller's painting actually shows one officer and ten men fighting and six dead, dying or wounded around them, plus the regimental dog, 'Bobbie', of whom more later. The whereabouts of the original painting are unknown, but a coloured stipple engraving by C. A. Tomkins was published in 1884. In the Salisbury

archives of the 66th's successors, The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment (Berkshire & Wiltshire), is Feller's preliminary sketch for the painting, presumably based on survivors' information as to dress etc. Curiously it does not include Bobbie, whose figure, it is believed by the DERR Regimental headquarters, was included in the final painting at regimental request.

In a boys' book published c.1890, *On Service at Home and Abroad* by Capt. Percy Groves, there appeared two chromolithographs after Harry Payne: one in colour, 'The last gallant stand of the 66th Regiment at Maiwand', the other in monochrome, 'Stragglers of the 66th coming in'.

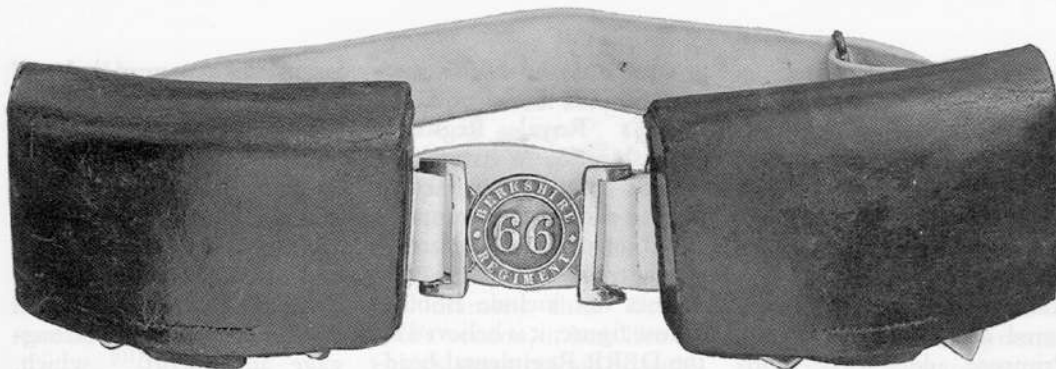
### Death under the Colours

Another depiction of the 66th, but in a different medium, is a sculpture form-

ing part of a memorial plaque in an Irish church, erected in 1886 by the brothers and sisters of Lt. Col. James Galbraith, who had fallen at Maiwand in command of the regiment. The sculptor was a Mr. Brock, advised by Col. J. T. Ready, who as a major had commanded the brigade baggage and escort<sup>(10)</sup> which, though heavily engaged, had managed to withdraw. The description of the sculpture on the memorial is another extract from Primrose's despatch: 'Lieut-Col. Galbraith was last seen on the nullah bank kneeling on one knee with a Colour in his hand and men rallying around him, and on this spot his body was found'. Brock's scene is therefore not of the last eleven, but of the regiment's first stand at the nullah to which they had retreated after the line collapsed, before falling back to the village gardens where the end came<sup>(11)</sup>.







Relics of Maiwand: helmets worn by Maj. Ready and his soldier-servant, with the latter's belt and pouches. (Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment)

A survivor, Capt. Slade RHA, reported that Col. Galbraith had been shot through both legs. A 66th survivor, Lt. Lynch, described the figures in Brock's group: 'Capt. McMath supports the falling body of Lt. Olivey. Lt. Honeywood erect with a revolver in his hand behind the kneeling figure of Col. Galbraith. Lt. Barr, wounded, in a recumbent posture in the left hand corner, and Sgt-Major Cuppage beneath the Colour which he held to the last'<sup>(12)</sup>. Besides these figures the group includes a number of 66th soldiers.

Brock employed some artistic licence in his composition. Although all these named officers were killed, only Galbraith, McMath and two others, Capt. Garrett and Cullen, were killed in or near the nullah. Lynch, who was in McMath's company, was wounded in the thigh between the nullah and the last garden and was got away to safety<sup>(13)</sup>; but he reported seeing Barr lying dead over one of the Colours near the garden.

Both Barr and Olivey had been holding up the Colours as rallying points but, when they were killed, Honeywood picked up one and

probably Sgt. Maj. Cuppage the other before they too were killed – all in or near the garden. According to Slade, Olivey had been wounded five minutes before he was killed – perhaps, as shown by Brock, at the nullah – but must have recovered the Colour, for when a sergeant, noticing his wound, offered to carry it for him, Olivey 'threatened to shoot the sergeant with his revolver and said he would rather die by the Colour than relinquish it in defeat'<sup>(12)</sup>. Barr and Olivey were very recently-joined young officers, having only been commissioned on 14 January 1880; Lynch had only a year's commissioned service and Honeywood eleven months.

The last known portrayal of the 66th is a modern painting, recently commissioned from Peter Archer by The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment. Like Feller, Archer has chosen to portray the last eleven and does indeed show only eleven men, plus Bobbie, though not apparently Lt. Hinde of the Bombay Grenadiers. Only one officer, who must be Chute, appears, holding the Regimental Colour. Although several officers and the regimental sergeant major had possession of the Colours at one time or another towards the end, there is no evidence that

Chute was among them; Maj. Frederick Myatt, late Royal Berkshire Regiment and a regimental historian, believes that both Colours disappeared during the fight in the garden. After Lynch had been carried off the only witness of the 66th's last moments was the Afghan colonel, who made no mention of a Colour. If it had been with the last eleven he, as an officer rather than a tribal irregular, might have thought its presence worthy of mention.

Another aspect of Archer's painting which varies from the evidence is the tribesmen who are rapidly closing in on the eleven from all sides – not, as the Afghan colonel stated, holding off until the last man fell. A comparison of Feller's and Archer's paintings show several similarities in the positioning of the figures, but whereas Feller's men appear to stand in a pass or defile, Archer has correctly shown them on an open plain with the mountains further away. He has, without doubt, imaginatively captured the terrible predicament and desperate courage of the last survivors of a lost battle.

### THE UNIFORMS

The Second Afghan War received considerable photographic coverage from which the campaign dress of several regiments can be deduced. Unfortunately no photographs of the 66th in Kandahar Province have come to light to confirm Feller's interpretation (generally followed by Archer); nor has any written evidence, since the regimental documents – order books and the like – were lost in the battle. However, from other 66th photographs and artefacts and what is known

of dress generally in the Afghan War, it is possible to assess the validity of the near-contemporary pictorial evidence with a view to reconstructing the appearance of the 66th.

The contemporary artists and the sculptor, Brock, all have the 66th wearing undress frocks, trousers and puttees. Feller, Woodville and Payne depict the frock and trousers as light khaki brown with a slight greyish tinge. Obviously, since Maiwand occurred in the hot weather, troops would not have worn the serge and other warmer clothing used at other times of the year during the war. Towards the end of the war a permanent khaki dye was devised in India and some regiments were issued with drill clothing of this colour. Before this became available, regiments had to utilise their peacetime hot weather white drill, dyed to some khaki shade under regimental arrangements. As the 66th was ordered to Afghanistan from Karachi at the start of 1880, it seems likely their hot weather clothing was dyed white drill.

Puttees were first adopted during this war by British troops in emulation of Indian regiments as more suitable than the regulation black leggings, which seem never to have been worn in India. Payne shows them as dark grey but, according to P. W. Reynolds (1860-1937) the military costume historian, Feller's were 'more brown than khaki except for the officer who has bluish-grey'; Feller would hardly have made this difference unless he had evidence for it. Reynolds also noted that the NCOs' rank chevrons were red, as was usual on drill clothing; Archer, incidentally, has shown them white.

In the present Regiment's museum at Salisbury are two helmets worn at Maiwand by Maj. Ready and his soldier-servant, of the customary foreign service pattern; Ready's is of superior material and still possesses its chin-chain. Neither has its pug-garee, which were always



used in India as additional protection and can be seen in the accompanying photographs of the 66th before the campaign and of its surviving officers after it; being removable and of a thin material such as muslin, they could easily have deteriorated or been lost over the years. The usual practice in Afghanistan was to have a khaki cover over helmet and puggaree. Such are shown by Woodville, Feller and Giles, though Brock has them exactly as they are today, probably having been shown Ready's helmet. Payne shows uncovered helmets with puggarees and chin-chains. The latter were customarily worn on parade, a leather strap on service. The sculpting on Brock's work is insufficiently clear on this point though the width suggests chains. Feller's painting, or rather the engraving, also indicates chin-chains, but hooked up over the helmets. Giles's and Woodville's gunners all have chin-straps.

Several battalions which had arrived in India before the

introduction of the 1871 Valise Equipment still had the old pouch-belt accoutrements of the 1860s during the war<sup>(14)</sup>. The 66th had reached India in April 1870, but all the pictorial evidence shows the 1871 equipment, confirmed by the waist-belt and black leather twin pouches used by Ready's servant at Maiwand and now in the DERR Museum. All the paintings and the sculpture, except Payne's, correctly show these pouches, plus the ball-bag and appropriate braces. Payne shows only one pouch, of the buff 1877 pattern with which he may have been more familiar, plus ball-bag.

None show the equipment's valise or folded greatcoat, and indeed these were always transported in Indian campaigning. One curious omission by all is the mess-tins usually carried on the men; either the artists simply forgot them or they were with the baggage to reduce the men's personal kit during arduous marches in the heat.

All the men are shown

with their haversacks, for rations, and water-bottles. The regulation water-bottle for the 1871 equipment was the wooden Oliver pattern; this appears in Payne's and Archer's work. It was not, however, used in India. Instead a soda-water bottle covered in buckram or leather and fitted with a cap and brown leather strap was issued. This is well depicted on Woodville's gunners; Brock has a reasonable representation of it, and it is also evident in Feller. The fact that these artists got this small but telling detail right, unlike Payne who more than any other specialised in military work, suggests experienced eyewitness advice.

The 66th had received the Martini-Henry rifle in August 1877 and this, together with its 21½in.-bladed triangular section socket bayonet, is shown by each artist, though Payne has the bayonets incorrectly fixed on the wrong side of the muzzle. No sergeants feature in the works, but they carried

the 1856 Enfield sword bayonet with 23in. yatagan blade, bushed for the Martini-Henry. A list of weapons lost by the 66th at Maiwand includes 48 bandsmen's and drummers' swords and 28 pioneers' swords, so it appears that these ranks were

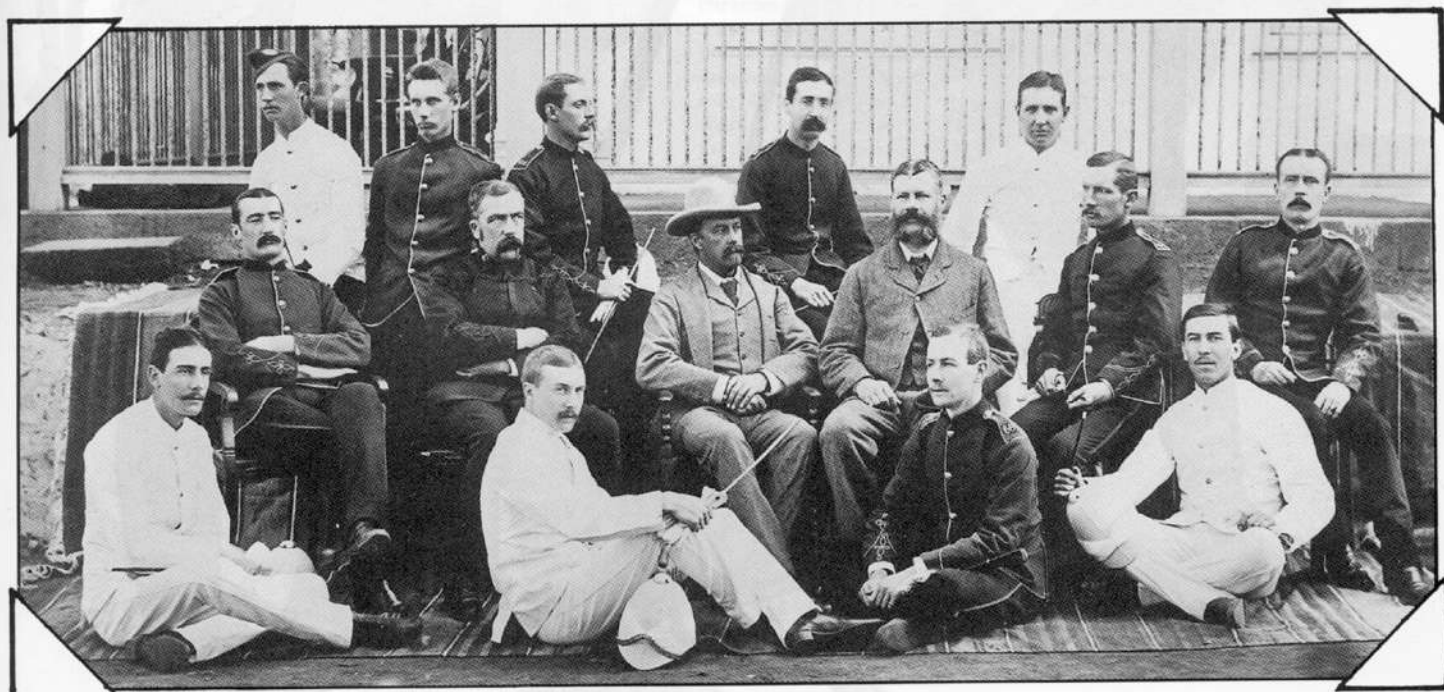
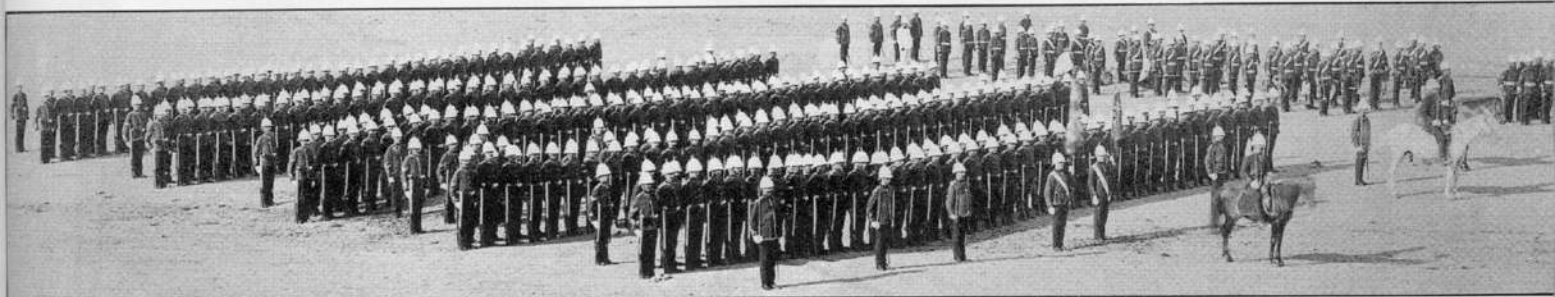
continued on page 28

#### Below:

*The 66th parading at Karachi in 1880 before leaving for Afghanistan, in cold weather dress of scarlet serge frocks, blue trousers. The two field officers and the adjutant (partly hidden), all mounted, are in front of the officers and Colours. At far right are the Pioneers preceding the Band and Drums. Three companies were on detachment in Scinde, but rejoined for Afghanistan. (Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment)*

#### Bottom:

*Some of the surviving officers of the 66th in February 1881, five in white drill, others in scarlet frocks. Back row, from left: Lts. O'Donnel\*, Bray, Faunce, Adams, Mellis. Centre: Lt. Fitzgerald, Surgeon-Maj. Beattie\*, Lt. Col. Hogge, Maj. Ready, Cpts. Beresford-Peirse, Bruce\*. Front: Lts. Loneragan, Lynch, Edwards, Bunny\*. (\* = Not at Maiwand.) (Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment)*





(1) Lt. Col. Galbraith, commanding 66th Regiment, holding the Regimental Colour as a rallying-point at Maiwand; based on Brock's memorial sculpture. He wears dyed white drill summer clothing, and field boots with spurs (as a mounted field officer); Indian pattern water-bottle; and Sam Browne belt supporting revolver, and sword of the 1822 pattern with 1845 blade. Note the helmet with its khaki cover. The white drill frocks worn by officers of the 66th had only four small regimental buttons in front, and no shoulder straps; Galbraith's rank badges of a crown and star are worn on the collar.

The Colour, of the 1868 pattern, was 3ft. 9in. in the fly, 3ft. deep, the ground in the grass-green of the regimental facings, the fringe gold and white, the cords mixed gold/crimson. In the centre was 'LXVI' within a circle inscribed 'BERKSHIRE REGIMENT' in gold on red, below the crown, all within a Union wreath; the Union in the upper canton. The honours were PENINSULA above the central motif; to the left of it DOURO, ALBUHERA, PYRENEES, NIVE; to the right, TALAVERA, VITTORIA, NIVELLE and ORTHES.

The Queen's Colour was the Union with 'LXVI' and crown in the centre, and gold and silver fringe.

(2) Gunner, E/B Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, shown as the No. 2 or sponge-man of a 9-pdr. RML field gun (with which this battery was armed at Maiwand); based on the G. D. Giles painting 'Saving the Guns'. Artillery frocks differed from the infantry pattern in having only four buttons in front and a very short skirt. Pantaloon, the dark blue puttees common to mounted troops, ankle boots and spurs complete his clothing. Every RHA gunner was armed with the 1853 Light Cavalry pattern

sword, which was hooked up to the sling waist-belt worn underneath the frock. The haversack and water-bottle (same patterns as in plates 3 and 4) were slung higher, and over opposite shoulders, than in the infantry. When mounted, his rammer/spongstaff was secured to the gun carriage. The Nos. 1-5 and 11-13 (horseholders) of a horse battery gunteam or sub-division (six to a battery) were individually mounted, Nos. 6-9 riding on the gun and wagon limbers. The drivers (three each per gun and wagon) were unarmed, but two carbines were carried on the gun-limber.





(3) **Private, 66th Regiment;** based on sources discussed in the text. Clothing: helmet in cover, the leather-backed chin-chain normally hooked up from the left side, passing diagonally up and right to the hook seen in plate 4; dyed white drill frock and trousers, brown puttees rolled from the ankle upwards, ankle boots. Equipment: reduced 1871 Valise Pattern with two 20-rd. pouches, 30-rd. ball-bag (inset below plate 4), haversack with three days' rations, water-bottle. Weapons: .45in. Martini-Henry rifle with socket bayonet. According to a 'Memorandum Book' carried by a 66th officer at Maiwand, the soldier's underclothing was a flannel vest, cotton shirt, pair of braces and socks; mounted men were also issued with drawers, dismounted were not. With the baggage in the valise were: spare set of all clothing and boots; washing, cleaning and

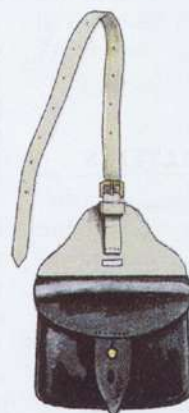
mending kits; clasp knife, towel, pocket ledger, Bible and Prayer Book, forage cap; plus mess-tin, greatcoat and waterproof sheet. The total weight carried on the man in this fighting order, less clothing but including weapons and ammunition, was 33lb. 8oz. (15.2kg).



3

(4) **Sergeant, 66th Regiment.** All particulars as for plate 3, except for three red chevrons on right upper sleeve only, and sword bayonet. The Indian pattern water-bottle, seen here, was common to all four illustrated figures. It was worn over the accoutrements, the haversack under them. When the valise was not carried the rear ends of the shoulder braces, having been secured where they crossed with a brass stud, were fastened under the arms to the buckles of the short straps from the front brace rings. Also from the brace rings, to which the braces were attached, two straps descended to pass through brass loops on the upper edge of the waist-belt either side of the clasp; and returned to the buckles below the rings, thus supporting the weight of the pouches looped on to the waist-belt. The ball-bag was attached to the right brace ring by a separate strap.

4





Bobbie at Osborne House after receiving the Afghan War Medal from Queen Victoria in August 1881. The 66th were by that date 2nd Berkshire. The soldier's tunic has the new white facings for English regiments; but his 1878 pattern blue helmet, only received when the regiment returned from India, has a 66th plate from the 1869 shako, the new plate not yet having been issued. (Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment)

armed with their special weapons rather than rifles. Doubtless some picked up the latter from casualties: Drummer Darby, for instance, was seen killed while defending the wounded Adjutant, Lt. Raynor.

Officers of the 66th only feature in Brock and Feller (whom Archer follows), and are clothed similarly to the men except for the puttee colour mentioned already. Feller's is accoutred with a regulation buff leather waistbelt with sword slings (to which a revolver holster and ammunition pouch are attached), haversack and water-bottle<sup>(15)</sup>. Brock has Galbraith, Barr and possibly Olivey wearing Sam Browne belts which, though unofficial, became very popular in the Afghan War as more convenient than the sling waistbelt. Neither Honeywood's nor McMath's belts are entirely clear; but how an officer carried his sword and revolver in Afghanistan depended on whether he had managed to get a Sam Browne sent up from India.

It is not proposed to discuss at similar length the dress of E/B RHA, as in view of Giles's reliability as a military artist and the documented advice he received, his depiction of the battery can, in this writer's opinion, be taken as sound evidence of E/B's appearance (see colour plate 2).

## PERSONALITIES

An accompanying photograph shows the real Bobbie who, thanks to the taxidermist's art, can be seen today in the DERR Museum. Of indeterminate breeding, Bobbie was the property of Sgt. Peter Kelly, though he



seems to have been regarded as the battalion dog. According to a document written by a comrade of Kelly's<sup>(12)</sup>, Kelly received a scalp wound at Maiwand but eventually reached Kandahar. Bobbie sustained a small wound on his back but, it was believed, remained with the last of the 66th. Thereafter it was thought he must have attached himself to Ayub's army, which marched on Kandahar and was defeated there by Roberts on 1 September 1880. That evening Bobbie walked into the 66th's lines.

He returned to England with the regiment, and on 19 August 1881 was decorated by Queen Victoria at Osborne House with the Afghan War Medal. Sadly, after all his adventures, he met his end while accompanying his regiment on the march, being run over by a cab apparently conveying a wedding party in Gosport.

Capt. McMath's dog, Nellie, was killed at Maiwand

and afterwards buried beside him. Billy, a bull terrier who had been given by Capt. Quarry to Sgt. Guntrip, reverted to Quarry after Guntrip fell, and survived with him.

Of the 20 officers of the 66th at Maiwand, ten were killed and two wounded. (Thirty years on another casualty was Lt. Lonergan, who was imprisoned for fraud.) The last veteran of Maiwand was Lt. (later Maj.) Lynch, who died aged 88 in 1947, having survived not only the Afghans in 1880 and the Hadendoa in 1885 during 1st Berkshire's grim struggle at Tofrek, but also the potential burden of a most unsoldierly Christian name – Hyacinth.

The 66th's medical officer at Maiwand was Surgeon-Major Preston. Badly wounded, he later became its most famous survivor through his momentous introduction in London to a man whose first words to him were: 'You have been in Afg-

hanistan, I perceive'. By then, however, he had been transmogrified into Sherlock Holmes' Dr Watson<sup>(16)</sup>. **MI**

## Acknowledgements

The assistance of the Headquarters staff of The Duke of Edinburgh's Royal Regiment, Miss Justine Taylor, Maj. Frederick Myatt MC, and Miss J. M. Spencer-Smith, National Army Museum, is most gratefully acknowledged.

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## Notes:

- (1) See Sources.
- (2) Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, currently loaned to 29 Commando Regt. RA. See colour reproduction, 'MI' No. 13 p. 36.
- (3) National Army Museum.
- (4) See 'MI' No. 8 pp. 28-33.
- (5) Paul Usherwood & Jenny Spencer-Smith, *Lady Butler – Battle Artist* (1987).
- (6) Collins later unfortunately forfeited the Cross, by Royal Warrant, for bigamy.
- (7) Not primarily a battle-painter, he was best known as a book and magazine illustrator.
- (8) Led a column to Maiwand in Sept. 1880 to locate and re-inter the dead.
- (9) Literally, Moslem fanatics dedicated to exterminating infidels.
- (10) Capt. Quarry's company 66th, one company each of 1st and 30th Bombay Native Infantry.
- (11) The nullah was about 900 yards from the right of Burrows's line, held by the 66th, and separated the main battlefield from the village of Khig, whose most distant garden – where the last stand took place – was 650 yards from the nullah.
- (12) Regimental archives.
- (13) Placed in a dhooly by Lt. Mellis (who survived), then on a camel from which he fell. Picked up by an Indian cavalryman, he again fell off, and was finally placed on a gun carriage.
- (14) The 1871 equipment had twin black or buff 20-round ammunition pouches on the waist-belt, supported by braces, and a black leather 30-rd. ball-bag. The 1877 buff pouches, used in the Zulu War, were not available in Afghanistan.
- (15) See also Plate G2, Men-at-Arms 198, *The British Army On Campaign 1816-1902(3): 1856-1881*.
- (16) A. Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887).



# World War I Uncovered

JOHN LAFFIN

Almost anybody who walks the killing-fields of the Somme or Flanders, Vimy or Verdun will find a rusted-out water-bottle, or even a lost clip of rifle cartridges. After more than four years of the most concentrated fighting in human history the Western Front of 1914-18 is impregnated with the debris of war. A lot of it went into the mud with the men who were using it, or were killed by it; so many bones also lie forgotten in these fields. In the Ypres Salient alone – just a few square miles of Belgian villages and farmland – some 80,000 British soldiers were never found for formal burial. As a professional military historian and battlefield archaeologist I have been digging into this war-soaked ground for more than 30 years.

It is heavy and potentially hazardous work; but while the 'treasures' which come to light are intrinsically worthless, they reveal a lot about the war. My collection now consists of about 4,000 separate items, the great majority of them dug up. I have found many more relics; but no collection needs more than a limited number of basically identical shell-shards and 18-pdr. shrapnel shell cases.

I work – with the permission of their owners – in fields and woods which were once battlefields. My basic equipment consists of wartime trench-maps, a metal detector, a thin steel probe about three feet long, a spade, a

trowel, and a small garden fork. However, my eyes and my experience are my best tools. I often find relics on the surface, or under nothing more than a layer of leaf-mould. I investigate anything symmetrical in shape, since nature produces nothing that is symmetrical: a tiny square lump of dirt spotted in a field at Flers on the Somme turned out to be a soldier's 'Crown and Anchor' dice.

A trench-map tells me precisely where to locate trench lines, whose outlines are often still visible in wooded country. The map also shows the positions of listening-posts, fortified mine craters, shellholes and barbed wire

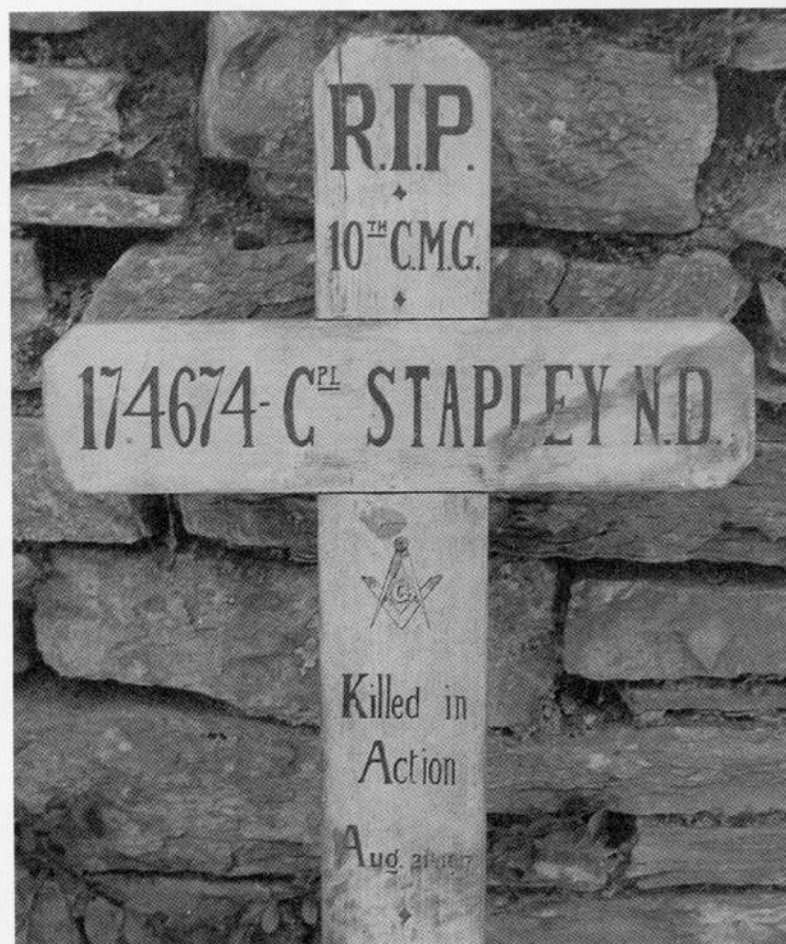
defences. It guides me into No Man's Land between the front lines; there are fewer things to find out there beyond the wire, but anything personal which does come to light in this fire-swept wilderness almost certainly belonged to a casualty

An exploratory hole dug in much fought-over ground – as here, at Longueval on the Somme – can produce much evidence of war. Among various shell fragments are a British helmet, a British water-bottle, the case of an 18-pdr. shrapnel shell, a jerrycan, an Army issue pick and shovel, and the remains of a cooker or heater. (All photographs, author's collection)

## Below:

This wooden cross is a classic example of what might be found behind the front. Since very little wood has survived since the Great War, it is also a lucky find. Its rarity is increased by the Masonic symbol of square and compasses. Cpl. Norval Douglas Stapley was a member of the 10th Canadian Machine Gun Co. when he was killed in action on 21 August 1917 and buried by his mates. After he was reburied at the end of the war in Villers Station cemetery, Villers au Bois, near Arras, under the standard stone marker, his wooden cross was put into a shed 20 miles away, where I eventually found it. Norval was the son of Thomas and Eve Stapley of Waterdown, Ontario; but my enquiries have brought me no closer to locating any present-day family.

of some desperate raid, or to a soldier who dropped or discarded it while creeping through the mud on night patrol.





Rifles only come out of the ground in a reasonable state, with woodwork largely intact, if they have been buried in protective blue clay. If they have been damaged by shell-fire and buried in liquid mud they emerge rusted, twisted and battered. I have a French Lebel with the barrel bent practically into a loop by the force of an explosion. Tens of thousands of rifles were lost in action; while some were collected by the salvage teams which scoured battlefields as soon as it was safe to do so, the fact that I have found the remains of 20 shows that many more remain. The find illustrated here is the most evocative that I have come across.

The breech and trigger mechanism of this British .303 SMLE are largely intact, together with the barrel with rearsight (tipped forward), foresight and bayonet boss. I found it in a farm field which had once been the site of German trenches at Rancourt, south of Bapaume. During an attack the British or Empire soldier who carried the rifle had fired a round, ejected the spent cartridge, and begun to reload when he was hit, and man and rifle dropped in the mud. The loading round is clearly visible half way into the chamber, as is one other round in the rusted magazine. The rearsight is set at 200 yards, effectively point-blank range for the SMLE, which allows us to speculate that the man may have been firing from the hip – customary during a moving attack. Unusually, some woodwork has survived, above the trigger guard and behind the bayonet boss.

#### Above right:

Objects identifiable to a particular soldier, such as this burial plaque, are treasured finds. Pte. Bill Outtram, 58th Bn., Australian Imperial Force, was 34 when he died of wounds suffered during the fighting for Flers on the Somme. Chaplain Harris buried him in a field at Montauban and marked his grave with a plaque hammered out of a bronze shell case; since the chaplain would have been burying men by the score, it is remarkable that he went to so much trouble for Pte. Outtram. At the end of the war, when burials in isolated places were being disinterred for reburial in collective cemeteries, Outtram was placed in Quarry cemetery, Montauban; the wartime marker was thrown into a field, which was sown with potatoes when I found it in 1984. I traced Outtram's son, who never knew his father, to a town in Victoria; and supplied him with photographs of his father's grave, the cemetery, the field in which he was first buried, and the battlefield where he was wounded. If battlefield archaeology is to mean anything, then finds should be followed up in this way.

<sup>(1)</sup>Western Front Association: Membership Secretary, Mrs. K. Dolphide, 47 Hawthorne Avenue, Liverpool L26 9XB; Trench Map Service, Miss E. M. Lund, 14 Elmsfield Close, Gravesend, Kent.



While original wartime trench-maps are virtually impossible to obtain, top-quality copies are available to members of the Western Front Association – a good reason in itself for joining this splendid organisation<sup>(1)</sup>. Unit histories can also be used in conjunction with trench-maps. It is possible to find that, say, a certain battalion of the Durham Light Infantry occupied a particular sector on a given day; and in my work I sometimes come across other detectives who are researching, on the ground, the service of a regiment which holds a special interest for them.

The central axis of an old trench is the best place to dig, since anything that might have been left on the sides or lips of the trench has long since slipped to the bottom, and now rests anything up to a yard below the surface. My probe is more useful than the metal detector here; and five or six contacts at a particular spot tell me the rough shape and texture of the object. Most commonly it is a shellshard. All battlefields are full of these chunks of steel, but especially Verdun, where the French and German batteries between them fired 40 million shells in six months of 1916.

I use a long-handled, narrow-bladed Flemish spade to open up an area; then, on my

hands and knees, I scrape with the trowel and small fork. A pick is worse than useless – not only will it smash a fragile object, but it could also detonate a grenade or shell.

The metal detector is useful in open areas where the war-torn land has long been ploughed and smoothed over, and where trench lines are difficult to fix. It hums most frequently for chunks of shell, and for barbed wire. Whenever I get a contact I trace it left and right to estimate how far it extends: if it is narrow, and stretches for more than a few feet, it is certainly a length of wire. It was the metal detector which located for me an entire roll of British wire on the Arras front. From its position in relation to the trenches I inferred that a wiring party had been unable to finish the job of putting up wire in a Dannert double-apron pattern, and had been forced to dump the roll.

Shellholes are always worth probing. Every shell had a fuse – a nose-cap – and it always survived the explosion intact, and often in remarkably good condition. The British examples are brass, or brass and steel, while many German fuses are made of iron. As hundreds of varieties can be found, they make an interesting collection. A shellhole does not



contain fragments from the shell which made it; hot and jagged, they whirled off at high velocity to smash, decapitate or disembowel any poor devil in their path. Almost certainly, a shell fragment found in a hole came from another shell bursting some distance away.

Many shells, both shrapnel and high explosive, did not explode. The poor record of British ordnance is well-known, and thoroughly documented in the many complaints by British infantry that the shells upon whose effect they depended during the bombardment before an infantry assault simply failed to go off. From the number of shells I find I know this to be true: unexploded British shells outnumber German and French examples. Some shells left the factories in defective condition; others were fired by gunners who set the fuses incorrectly; still others, set to

explode on impact, failed to do so because they fell in soft mud. (Field gun shell dumps are still occasionally found – nearly always British. The logical inference is that the British gunners and their positions were destroyed by enemy counter-battery fire before they could use up their supplies of shells.)

Grenades abound on these battlefields, particularly the 'Mills bomb' – the No. 5 and No. 36 HE grenades. Their survival, intact and often in good condition, is a tribute to their sound design and high quality of manufacture. German stick grenades are much rarer; their thin casing rusted away much more quickly than the massive cast fragmentation casing of the Mills, while the wooden handles rotted. That so many HE grenades failed to explode is not surprising, considering the numbers used in these battles: in a single fight at Pozières in 1916 the bombers of one Aus-

tralian battalion threw some 15,000 grenades. In the feverish heat of an action some were thrown without the pin being withdrawn. I sometimes find bombs in which the striker has plunged to the base of the grenade but for some reason failed to set off the cap which would have ignited the fuse to the detonator. It can hardly be stressed too often that grenades are among the most dangerous of all battlefield relics; they are often in a deadly condition, and should be left strictly alone<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is not only the front line trenches which yield relics. The support line and, further back, the reserve line were also packed with men who often left their equipment there, perhaps before an attack or after being wounded. The busiest trenches of all were the communication trenches, running from the rear areas to the front at right angles to the

<sup>(2)</sup>See 'MI' Nos. 7, 15 and 16 for in-depth articles on British and German grenades and bomb-squad tactics of the Great War.

#### Below

*These remains of three Cameron Highlanders, found in 1983 at Deerpik east of Ypres, tell a story. Spent British bullets among the bones suggested to some local officials that the men may have been victims of a military execution; but this could not have been so, since there was no known case of three soldiers being executed at one time. Research shows that elements of a battalion of Camerons fought an action near Deerpik in October 1918; and I am reasonably certain that the three unidentified Scots were accidentally killed by their own or some other British unit when they somehow got too far ahead. They might have been on a scouting mission, or pushing forward to attack an enemy post. It is likely that whoever accidentally killed them removed their identity discs, to cover up what may have been negligence; no rifles remained with the bodies, but water-bottles, ammunition, helmets and army boots were among the clutter of equipment surrounding the bones. The three Camerons are now buried together as 'unknowns' at Cement House cemetery in the Ypres Salient.*





Empty shrapnel shell cases, without their fuses, are the most commonly-found complete battlefield relics. This one, picked up at Gommecourt, Somme, has been cut away and given a fuse and some balls to show details of construction. Originally the case was full of steel or lead balls. (Pieces of high explosive shells are not shrapnel, but shards or splinters – only these balls, or cubes in the case of Belgian shells, are properly termed 'shrapnel'.) In spring 1985 a British shrapnel shell of this type killed Jacques Covemaeker, a Flemish farmer, at Loere. He was drilling holes to sow beet when one of the drills bored into a shell which had lain in the field since April 1918, when British gunners on nearby heights stemmed a German breakthrough. Shrapnel shell fuses, and empty cases, are readily found with a metal detector and are perfectly safe.

The sketch shows the cross-section of a shrapnel shell. The time-fuse is set to burn for a particular length of time at the time of loading into the gun. A small charge of powder in the fuse is ignited, and this sends a flame down the central tube to explode the black powder bursting-charge in the base of the shell. The high-grade steel case does not break up: the noscap is blown off the front, and the contents of the shell are blown out the hole forwards – the effect resembles firing a giant shotgun at the enemy from above and about 100 yards in front, and if properly regulated the explosion distributes one ball to about one square yard of surface. Should the shell fail to burst in the air, a secondary impact fuse would operate on contact with the ground.

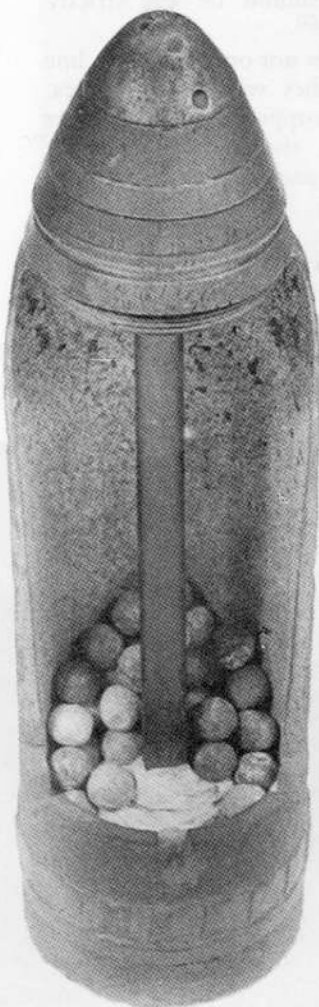
The helmet in the photograph shows the effect of shrapnel when a shell discharged its balls close to the ground. This French soldier was killed by four balls in the head; his helmet was found 18in. deep near Fort Vaux at Verdun.

fighting lines. Along these cramped pathways a constant stream of soldiers trudged back and forth with loads of food and water, ammunition, replacement weapons, and all manner of trench stores and equipment. In the crowded confusion of these nighttime journeys, especially under shellfire, much of this stuff was dropped and trodden into the mud. It lies there still – though usually at too great a depth for a single digger to unearth.

While it is not unusual to find the occasional human bone, there is little danger of a battlefield archaeologist nowadays coming across an entire skeleton. They do come to light, however, during the building of roads across the old battlefields, or when foundations for new buildings are being dug out. Contractors are required to report the discovery of human remains, but most conceal such finds because the consequent official search and formalities can hold up their work.

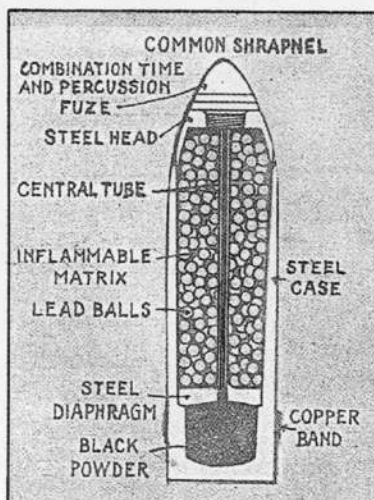
Battlefield archaeology has

one aspect unknown to the academic professional investigating an ancient site – the searching of barns and out-houses behind the lines. Millions of soldiers of all the armies were billeted in farm buildings, which were also used to store weapons and equipment. Many men put pieces of their gear out of the way, up on beams or in dark corners, and then forgot to recover them before leaving. Over the decades farmers have come across much of this stuff; nevertheless, I have found undiscovered clothing, field glasses, bayonets, clasp

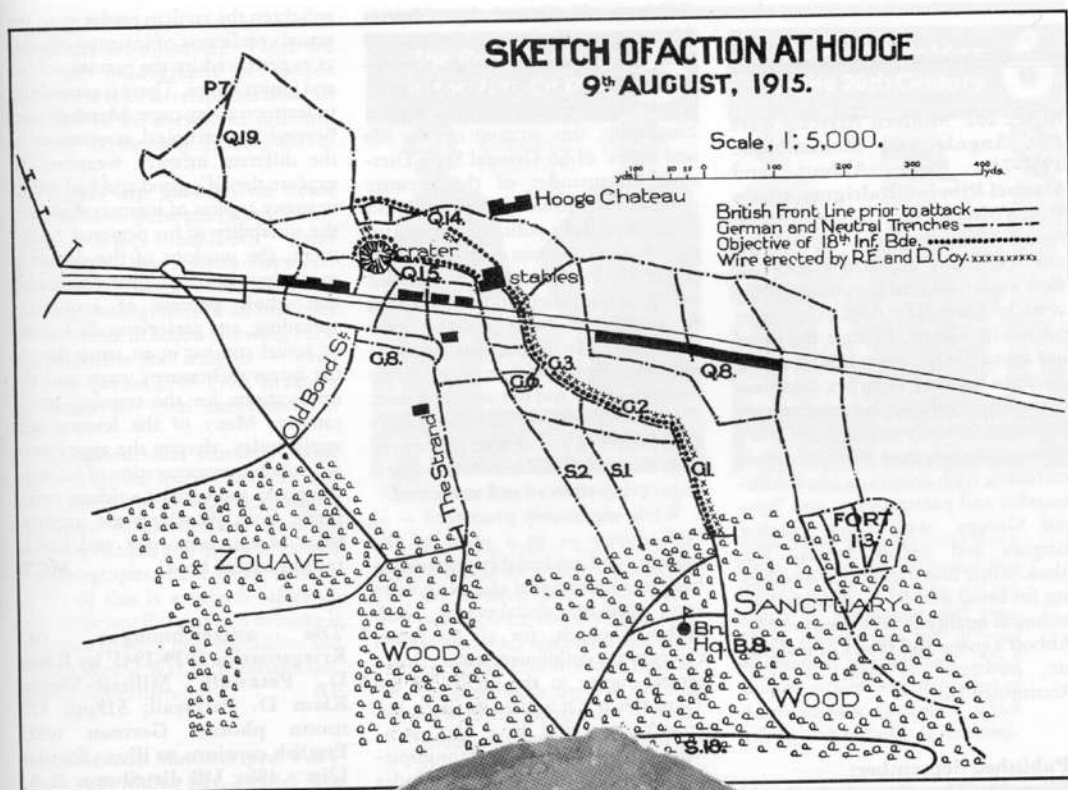


#### Right centre:

A farmer in the Estaires district of French Flanders displays proprietorial pride in German 155mm and French 75mm shells which he dug out of his land. The 155s each weigh 50kg. A gendarme checks them over; such finds are commonplace, and are stacked at field corners until picked up for destruction, perhaps months later, by army bomb disposal teams. In the meantime it is possible that scavengers may get to the shells first, and try to salvage the driving bands and nose-caps for scrap – or even the remaining explosive, for dubious purposes. Old shells still kill the unwary quite frequently, and even experts can fall victim: in 1986 five members of the elite Belgian bomb disposal unit were killed by a gas shell which exploded while they were examining it. Shells should never be tampered with, and especially if their nose-caps are still in place.







Sometimes maps from unit histories are a good substitute for trench maps. Using this battle sketch from a history of the Sherwood Foresters, I traced the objective of the 18th Inf. Bde. on the ground; and at its left boundary, about where the last dot appears, I found a clip of British rifle ammunition.

#### Below centre:

On 9 April 1917 British forces, with the Canadian divisions in the lead, attacked and captured the apparently impregnable German positions on Vimy Ridge north of Arras. One of the German defenders who died in that battle was the owner of this helmet, crucifix and coffee pot; he had been brewing up at the time of the Canadian artillery barrage, and the pot still contains coffee grounds. The other object is the piece of British Stokes Mortar shell which smashed his spine. My daughter and I found the soldier's bones and these belongings on a gloomy, misty November evening. The ground we were working had been heavily shelled, and the earth was heaped up in mounds; one of the thunderous eruptions of earth had buried the soldier – whom we christened 'Fritz Vimy' for lack of identification – before his remains could be recovered.

The crucifix, to which shreds of its leather carrying pouch still cling, suggests that he was a Roman Catholic; and German regimental histories reveal that Bavarian troops, most of whom were Catholics, were in the trenches on the night of 9 April 1917. 'Fritz's' remains were buried in a German military cemetery as those of an 'unknown', but I feel that I know him rather well.



knives and cigarette cases in barns, and farm buildings up to five miles behind the front are worth investigating. The most difficult part of the operation is in obtaining the farmer's permission, but patience, politeness, and the use of French or Flemish often produces results. **M**

#### Above right:

This precious find came to light near Ypres railway station. The area is built up, but I kept my eyes on the ground when I came across workmen turning it over for railway repairs and extensions: I knew that this had been an assembly area through which many troops had

passed. The watch belonged to 4298 R. P. Staley, 7th Bn., 2nd Inf. Bde., AIF; he must have been sorry to lose it. Pte. Staley was reported missing on the Somme, 70 miles south of Ypres, in April 1918. He came from Victoria, but beyond that I have been unable to trace his family.



# REVIEWS

Osprey Men-at-Arms and Elite series: MAA all 48pp, 8pp col. illus., approx. 40 b/w illus., £4.95 ea.; Elite all 64pp, 12pp col. illus., approx. 50 b/w illus., £5.95 ea.; available in case of difficulty direct from George Philip Services, Freeport, Littlehampton, W. Sussex BN17 5BR (plus 15% P&P)

Published July:

**MAA 199 'Napoleon's Specialist Troops', Philip Haythornthwaite, plates Bryan Fosten.** The depth of treatment one would expect from this author and artist, applied to the French Napoleonic artillery (including line and Guard, horse and foot, regimental, volunteer, coast, garrison, National Guard and veteran units); engineers, pioneers, pontoniers and fire service; supply and commissariat; and medical services. A densely packed text, good early black/white illustrations, and Mr. Fosten's usual glowing colour figures. Napoleonic enthusiasts owe a considerable debt to this team, and not only for the uniform information on the obscurer arms: even the artillery presents a difficult picture, expertly teased out here. Recommended.

**MAA 200 'El Cid and the Reconquista, 1050-1492', David Nicolle, plates Angus McBride.** For the 200th title in the series – and what an achievement that is – Osprey have given Dr. Nicolle and Mr. McBride their heads with a complex, colourful subject. One suspects that although Rodrigo de Vivar himself does appear in the colour plates, and briefly in the text, his name is attached largely for promotion purposes to a book which in fact covers the whole subject of armies in Spain over five centuries. The chronology and chapter organisation make a plain path through a jungle of merging European and Islamic identities and styles of warfare. The plates are quite superb, and will excite all medieval modellers – Plates C and D are diorama subjects *par excellence*, if you've the skill and courage. Many happy returns, to a publisher who in this book has given us a splendid birthday gift.

**MAA 201 'The British Army on Campaign 1816-1902: (4) 1882-1902', Michael Barthorp, plates Pierre Turner.** With this title Mr. Barthorp brings his massively detailed convoy of facts safe into harbour. It follows the established format: a linking introduction on the state of the army in 1882; a chronology of campaigns, complete with regimental battle honours; a clear and extremely interesting chapter on fighting tactics; and a meticulous survey of uniforms, equipment and weapons. The black/white pictures are an interesting mixture of photos and artist's impressions; and the colour plates – carefully annotated, as always – show a welcome return to the standard which some readers felt had slipped a little with No.3 in this series. Recommended.

**MAA 202 'Modern African Wars (2): Angola and Mocambique 1961-74', Peter Abbott and Manuel Ribeiro Rodrigues, plates Ron Volstad.** An intriguing subject, never before to my knowledge covered in any depth in English. A clear explanation of the course of the wars in Portugal's African colonies (including Guiné, though this does not appear on the cover title); a useful guide to the very complex organisation of the Portuguese expeditionary forces, and locally-raised units; and a most attractive set of uniform plates, including such exotics as black commandos and paratroopers, and 'Special Groups' with black combat fatigues and yellow berets. The black/white illustrations are interesting for being new to us, though their technical quality is very uneven: Mr. Abbott's maps and tables of insignia are, however, as neat as ever. Recommended.

Published September:

**Elite 19 'The Crusades', David Nicolle, plates Richard Hook.** This is a subject which Osprey have chipped at in some earlier MAA titles, and they are to be congratulated for this reprise. The Crusader States are also covered, up to their collapse at the very end of the 13th century; as are such associated areas as Cyprus, Armenia, and Trebizond. Apart from the expected chapters on the course of the campaigns, organisation and tactics, arms and armour, there is a section on castles and siege warfare. This book is a very thorough introduction to the subject, packing in more detail of military interest than many more pretentious and expensive volumes. Mr. Hook's plates are full of action and vigour, his rendering of costume and armour clear and careful. The subjects include several named knights and leaders who would make good models, including a reconstruction of Richard I which is a good deal more convincing, and colourful, than most we have seen. Excellent value.

**Vanguard 46 'The Renault FT Light Tank', Steven J. Zaloga, plates Peter Sarson.** This now very occasional series is still, we are told, a going concern, but is dependent on scarce good subjects. There can be no doubt that the Renault qualifies: not only was it the most successful tank of the Great War, but it served in many often obscure campaigns inter-war, in many liveries – of which a good many are depicted in the clear, pleasing colour plates. Mr. Zaloga's text is, as usual, a model of concise clarity, and his black/white photographs are well selected, including some very rare shots. The text is enlivened by some fascinating 'war stories'. This will be welcomed by tank modellers in particular, but has much of interest for any student of early 20th century warfare. JS

**'Hitler's Gladiator' by Charles Messenger; Brassey's; 262pp, 38 b/w ill., 14 maps; notes, appendices, index; £14.95 (US, \$26.95)**

While not claiming to be a formal biography, this account of 'the life and times' of SS General Sepp Dietrich, commander of the premier combat formation of the Waffen-SS from its seed as a political strong-arm squad to its final ruin as an 'armoured army', is by far the most detailed study yet published. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a fuller account ever appearing. Mr. Messenger has done an admirable job of primary research; he has sought (and not always found) corroboration even for official Second World War German documentary sources, and the whole book is impeccably sourced and annotated.

While vigorously promoted – in both senses – as a pillar of the regime, and undeniably interesting both as an individual and as an early and intimate collaborator with Hitler, Dietrich, for all his fame, emerges as an emblematic rather than a central figure in the affairs of the Third Reich. Of limited intellect, but great courage and drive, this essentially simple man had a gift for inspiring the loyalty of his troops. Under his leadership the formidable low-numbered combat divisions of the Waffen-SS made for themselves a reputation second to none, particularly as 'fire brigades' in the East and in NW Europe in 1943-45.

This fair and balanced study is particularly strong in its coverage of Dietrich's obscure but interesting career in the First World War, including combat service in one of the first tank units; and in its scrutiny of the atrocity charges levelled against units under Dietrich's command, not all of which stand up to examination. This is a first-class book, heartily recommended to all students of the Second World War. MCW

**'Infantry Operations & Weapons Usage in Korea' by S.L.A. Marshall; Greenhill Books; 170pp; 8 b/w ill., maps, diagrams; £16.50**

This study, by a leading US military historian, of the vital detail of infantry company actions in the winter fighting of 1950-51 first appeared as a restricted-circulation document for internal US Army use in 1952. This facsimile reprint, with a new preface by Edward C. Ezell, is a welcome opportunity for a wide readership to enjoy and learn from a classic study of 'the behaviour of men in the use of weapons' and 'the behaviour of weapons as men use them'. Marshall's method was to carry out uninhibited interviews with all ranks of infantry companies as soon as possible after they came out of battle. He recorded everything; and later synthesized the soldiers' impressions and opinions into this statistically-based but entirely readable paper. While it is written in the sometimes over-complicated and rather jargon-heavy gargon so beloved by Americans when writing for a professional readership, it remains a fascinating and vivid piece of work. It is one of the very few books which genuinely

enlighten the civilian reader as to the actual conditions of infantry combat as experienced by the private soldier and junior leader. There is something to learn on every page: Marshall goes beyond the technical assessment of the different infantry weapons, to explore the GI's good and bad habits in many aspects of infantry fighting; the suitability of his personal equipment; the wisdom of the demands made upon him by higher command; the whole process of acquiring, spreading, and preserving the lessons of actual combat in an army during the intervals between wars; and the implications for the training programme. Many of the lessons still apply today, despite the appearance of a whole new generation of infantry weapons; and serving soldiers could profit from absorbing the implications of this important and highly recommended book. MCW

**'Die auszeichnungen der Kriegsmarine 1939-1945' by Klaus D. Patzwall; Militair-Verlag Klaus D. Patzwall; 518pp; 577 mono photos; German text; English captions to illus.; format 12in x 18in; UK distributor A.A. Johnston, Pitney, Langport, Somerset; £52.00**

This new and excellent reference book must eventually become the classic work on the subject of the German Navy at war 1939-1945. Due to its clear, concise, large format even non-German speaking students of the subject will be able to follow the outline. The English captions beneath all illustrations and photographs complete the picture of an illustrated encyclopaedia.

This work is Volume No.5 in a proposed mammoth undertaking of eight volumes in all which will cover the German Third Reich era under the following titles: *Band 1 Zivilauszeichnungen; Band 2 Wermachts-Ehrenzeichen; Band 3 Auszeichnungen des Heeres; Band 4 Auszeichnungen der Luftwaffe; Band 5 Auszeichnungen der Kriegsmarine; Band 6 Auszeichnungen der NSDAP; Band 7 Auszeichnungen für den Sport; Band 8 Ordensrecht, Quellen, Hersteller, Nachträge, Gesamtregister.* Together, the collected works constitute the leading illustrated reference encyclopaedia on Hitler's war machine and all its aspects from 1933 to 1945.

To return to Volume 5: although the title is 'History of the German Navy 1939-1945' the book in fact starts with background history from the period 1919 to 1921: the tottering Weimar republic, and subsequent raising of the anti-communist military Freikorps units from First World War veteran soldiers, sailors and airmen. The book contains many excellent illustrations of Freikorps awards and insignia worn by Naval personnel, including photographs of recipients in various naval uniforms. A brief history of the Freikorps precedes the 1939-1945 conflict.

All Third Reich military and administration medals, citations, war combat badges, sports awards, long service awards, campaign cuff titles



and shields, bravery decorations and certificates are illustrated. There are also rare photographs of awards being presented to recipients from all branches of the service in differing theatres of the war from 1939 to 1945.

Chapters are included on items such as Naval personnel service I.D. books e.g. 'Soldbuch' and 'Wehrpass'. There is also a chapter on flags and pennants. There are many exciting photographs of all branches of the service in action showing various uniforms and insignia — even from the period 1944–1945, so rarely illustrated or even mentioned in books.

Throughout this scholarly work one encounters specific sources and references with quoted titles, names and dates. All illustrations of actual citations, medals and insignia, as well as photographs, have listed credits. All in all this is a superb reference with sufficient illustrations to make it attractive to both non-specialists and Second World War enthusiasts alike. Highly recommended. **AF**

**'The Dickson Manuscripts: Vol I' (1809), ed. Major J.H. Leslie; Ken Trotman Ltd.; 140pp.; portrait, maps, illus.; paperback £12.50; cloth £25; calf £50**

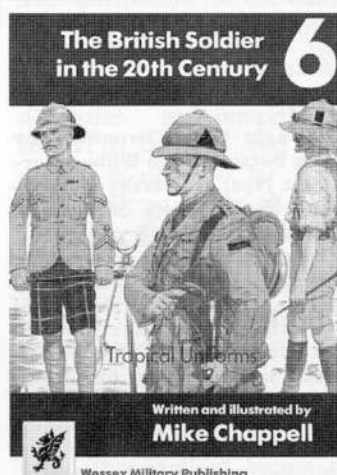
This is perhaps the most ambitious project yet attempted by the Ken Trotman reprint programme, which makes available rare works of prime historical importance. The papers of Maj. Gen. Sir Alexander Dickson were first published in 1905, and are of the greatest significance; so that it is extremely valuable that Ken Trotman Ltd. should plan to re-issue five volumes, one for each year of the Peninsular War. These are the documents which Oman described as being 'always at my elbow' (*Peninsular War IV*, p. viii) — which should be recommended enough.

Sir Alexander Dickson was the most famous artillery officer of his generation, and his papers are thus an invaluable source for the operations of Wellington's artillery in the Peninsular War. This first volume covers 1809, when Dickson was originally Brigade Major to Gen. Howarth (commanding Royal Artillery), which situation he vacated due to Howarth's unwarranted hostility; and thereafter he commanded a division of the Portuguese artillery. Dickson's entire writings are included: diary, notebooks, official reports, letters and accounts; thus what results is a complete account of the formations which he commanded — a treasure for the Peninsular historian.

Much of the 1809 volume concerns administrative matters, at a time when the re-organisation of the Portuguese Army was beginning; thus is demonstrated all the difficulty with which Dickson and his colleagues had to contend, from the resentment caused by the introduction of British officers into the Portuguese Army, to the constant problem of providing food and forage for his unit. The logistic problems of this early period may be gathered from his detach-



*The latest pair of titles in the increasingly useful series of inexpensive booklets from Mike Chappell's Wessex Military Publishing, on uniforms, equipment and insignia of the British soldier since the beginning of the century. At £3.50 each, and including about 32 photographs and four pages of detailed colour artwork, these represent ex-*



*cellent value. We understand that a binder is now available; and that Wessex intend to increase the frequency of publication this year. These booklets are full of good information; for instance, No.5 contains pictures and description of American-made Battledress which will be most valuable to collectors.*

ment, which had to march 436 miles simply to collect twenty uniforms.

Part of the Dickson papers are in the form of a travelogue, with descriptions (for military use) of terrain and villages, which information, though valuable, is not of consuming interest to the non-specialist reader; but this is more that offset by fascinating insights into Dickson's life and that of his command.

Of greater historical significance are the organisational details and the often protracted correspondence necessary in settling even the most trivial matters, including having to move his entire artillery park to make room for the local fair, which (war or no) took precedence over matters of national defence. Most revealing also is a note to Dickson from Benjamin D'Urban which apologises for the lack of news, as 'the lies of the day are not worth the sending you'.

The collection is edited most expertly by Maj. John H. Leslie (author of *The Services of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in the Peninsular War*), who states that 'it had not been found necessary to omit a single sentence, or even a word' from the diary, the editing being a model, explaining without intruding or re-arranging the original. In short the work is essential for all Peninsular enthusiasts; and the whole Ken Trotman project is recommended unreservedly. **PJH**

**'Relation of the Operations and Battles of the Austrian and French Armies in the Year 1809'; W. Müller (facsimile reprint of 1810 edn.; Ken Trotman Ltd.; stiff card covers; viii & 109pp., 3 maps; £8.50**

This latest volume in the Ken Trotman Military History Monographs series is one of few contemporary accounts of the Wagram campaign available to British readers from

within months of the event. Its author (best known for his *Elements of the Science of War*, 1811, for which an advertisement prefaces the present work) was a leading military writer of his day, instructor of military science at the university of Göttingen (PhD, MA) and at the time of writing an officer in the engineers of the King's German Legion. He believed his book a 'just and perfect view of all those relative facts and circumstances... the statements are collected from official papers, and the information of eye-witnesses'.

This describes the character of the book: a chronological account of Napoleon's last successful war, collected largely from German sources, without the benefit of hindsight or the use of French records. It is no less interesting for that, for it stands not only as an attractive 'period piece' but is also one of few English-language accounts to make detailed mention of the exploits of individual Austrian regiments, which make Müller's use of Austrian sources evident. It contains not only an account of the major battles of the 1809 campaign (Aspern-Essling and Wagram) but also many smaller actions, and curious facts regarding the practices of the time, including Archduke Charles' rewarding 'the regiment of Erbach with the preference to beat on all occasions the grenadiers march'; plus casualty-list and other statistics.

The reader will find some odd early spellings such as 'Shippick's' hussars for 'Stipsicz', or 'Wallack's' for the *Wallachisch-Illyrisches Grenzers*, and 'Insbruck' for 'Innsbruck' on a map; but these present no difficulties. The study ends with the Archduke Charles's somewhat unfair criticisms of his defeated army, blaming the ordinary soldiers instead of the failings of staff and organisation; threats of startling ferocity

include literal decimation for ill-behaved units: 'the tenth man shall be condemned to die... Cries of alarm among the troops shall be punished with death'. And one gem of criticism: 'The regiment of Hesse Nem-burgh did nothing but wander here and there; sometimes the cry of 'forward' was heard, where there was no enemy' — doubtless an 1809 version of the 20th-century 'keeping one's head down'.

At £8.50 this book is worth the attention of every Napoleonic enthusiast. **PJH**

**'Dare to Win: The Story of the New Zealand Special Air Service' by W.D. Baker; Spa Books Ltd., PO Box 47, Stevenage, Herts SG2 8UH; 107pp.; 111 b/w illus., 16 col. illus.; maps; index; £12.95**

For a small, close-knit, and security-conscious unit, the NZ SAS has yielded some interesting photographs to author W.D. Baker and researcher M. St. Jean. It is a tribute to both that they have penetrated the 'non-boastful silence' of the unit, and produced a book not limited to anecdote. Chapters cover selection and training, rôles, weapons, equipment and uniforms; Malaya 1955–57, Thailand 1962, Borneo 1965–66, and Vietnam 1968–71. This last is the only campaign in which the Australian and NZ SAS have operated in the absence of 22 SAS Regt., whose selection procedure they have largely copied. The author comments that the 'Viet Cong... seem to have appreciated the capabilities of the SAS in its recce-ambush patrols. Unfortunately, the SAS's example seems to have been repeatedly overlooked by both the American and South Vietnamese tactical planners' — a comment with added strength when one learns that Mr. Baker is himself an American.

This book is a useful addition to the small sum of serious information about the SAS in its various national configurations. **EWFW**

**'British Small Arms of World War Two: The Complete Reference Guide to Weapons, Makers' Codes and 1936–1946 Contracts' by Ian Skennerton; published by the author in Margate, Australia, and available in the UK through Greenhill Books; 110pp, b/w illus.; h/bk; £12.95**

Few writers can claim to have had as great an impact on their subjects as Ian Skennerton has had on modern smallarms. A prodigious output over nearly two decades has dealt comprehensively with almost every British and Commonwealth weapon. *British Small Arms of World War Two* is a valuable work giving the specialist reader details of codes and contract data which would only otherwise be available at the Record Office. Perhaps the most important part for the collector is the code listings, which allow one to determine at a glance that, e.g., a particular 'No.5' or jungle carbine was made by BSA at Shirley, or that parts of a Sten Mk II were made by J.W. Spear and Sons of Green St. Enfield.



Obviously this is the sort of information that no serious student should be without, and it is a major contribution to the deciphering of some of the worst hieroglyphics found on British arms. The sections relating to the contracts for anti-tank weapons and projectors are particularly fascinating; who would have realised, for example, that the main supplier of the PIAT was ICI? The general reader should be warned, however, that this is principally a reference rather than a book which is easy to read cover to cover.

Although this book must be recommended as a new and original work and a worthwhile addition to the enthusiast's library, one can take issue with the paucity of references. Eight documents and a dozen secondary works are mentioned, but the researcher will have difficulties when he goes to see the primary material himself. **SB**

**'An Introduction to British Grenades' by Ian Skennerton; published in Margate, Australia by the author and available in the UK through Greenhill Books; 56pp; b/w illus.; p/bk; £4.95**

Another interesting book from the prolific pen of Ian Skennerton; no grenade collector or weapons man need read any more — they should go and buy it immediately, and at this price they cannot be disappointed.

The more general reader may be interested to know that Skennerton has made a creditable first attempt at a large and complicated subject. The vast bulk of the text and illustration is concerned with the numbered series of bombs beginning with the 'No.1' in 1908 and concluding with the 'No.95' in the 1950s. Only a page each are devoted to the earliest grenades and the modern NATO types, so this volume might more accurately be called 'British Grenades of the Two World Wars'. Nonetheless as an introduction it is clear and concise; black and white photos of each bomb are accompanied by a few lines of explanatory text and specifications. There is a great deal of ground to cover, and this is admirably done in the limited space available.

There can be little doubt that this book will prove popular, as what little else has been written is rather less accessible — be it this reviewer's own articles in *Army Museum* and elsewhere, or Delhomme's articles and booklets in French. As a handy first reference this is difficult to fault.

At risk of being pedantic one might, however, offer two criticisms. Firstly, the photographs are not always quite as clear as one would like. Secondly, the sources are not used as critically as they should be: sometimes introduction dates and obsolescence dates are given as if they were cut and dried fact. As we are all too well aware, these things often turn up at the front before they have 'officially' been invented, and may disappear years before the clerical departments of the ministry concerned realises, and writes them off!

Even so this book well deserves its place on the shelf, and I for one will turn to it frequently. Those readers

who know Ian will have been saddened to hear of his car accident last year, and we all wish him a full and prompt recovery. **SB**

**'I Fought With Geronimo' by Jason Betzinez with Wilbur Sturtevant Nye; University of Nebraska Press; 214pp; 58 illus.; 8 maps; p/bk; \$7.95 US**

If it were only a novel, this would be a compelling book; but it is a factual account, telling the marvellous tale of a remarkable man. Jason Betzinez was born in 1860, and had a traditional upbringing in the Warm Springs Apache band. He was 16 when his people were cruelly evicted; he subsequently experienced the thrill and terror of life as a fugitive, joining the break-outs from the reservation led first by Victorio and subsequently by his cousin Geronimo.

In the late 1880s Jason entered the Carlisle Indian School; he subsequently took an 'Anglo' name, learned the blacksmith's trade, became a Christian, served for 13 years as a US Scout at Ft. Sill, and married a missionary. He lived to survive a serious car accident; and was 99 when this book was first published in 1959.

The book provides an excellent primary account of Apache history, drawing on the oral tradition of Jason's people. The photographs are extensively, and excellently, captioned. Beginning with the Mexican slaughter of Warm Springs Apaches at Ramos in 1850, the author gives an unbiased account of the wars of Cochise, Victorio and Geronimo. There are valuable descriptions of camp life, tribal structure, family relationships, religion and ceremony, and hunting. Preparations for and tactics in battle are documented (and the Apache distaste for scalping emphasised). Despite its dramatic title this is a well-balanced account of the Apache wars.

Jason clearly explains the root of the conflict as lying in this people's eviction from land legally granted them. He points out the Apaches' strong feelings of racial superiority; and criticises their weakness for whisky. His views on some points, such as conditions on the reservations, are more favourable than those of many commentators; and his criticisms of the treatment of his people have the greater force, coming from a Christian convert who came to feel distaste for many of the Apaches' traditions. They have great weight and credibility, in the light of his calm reflection: 'I am not bitter'. **JH**

**'Death on the Prairie: The Thirty Years' Struggle for the Western Plains' by Paul I. Wellman; University of Nebraska Press; 298pp; illus.; p/bk.; £7.25; and 'Death in the Desert: The Fifty Years' War for the Great Southwest', ditto, 294pp.**

These two books were originally published in 1934 and 1935 respectively; and UNP is to be congratulated for reissuing them, for two reasons. Firstly, despite new facts

coming to light thanks to the work of Robert M. Utley and others, very little of Wellman's books is outdated; and secondly, he was the very best type of popular historian. He wrote extensively about the West as a whole, but these are his finest achievements. In the 1940s and 1950s he introduced many Britons to the Indian Wars at a time when it was very hard indeed to get sound facts. He cited his sources, not standard practice in the popular field. May these two books have the success that they have enjoyed in the past; they deserve it. **RM**

**'I Fought with Custer; The Story of Sergeant Windolph, Last survivor of the Battle of the Little Big Horn' as told to Robert and Frazier Hunt; University of Nebraska Press; 236pp; maps, illus.; foreword by Neil Mangum; flexi-cover; £6.60, \$6.95**

This interesting work first appeared forty years ago, three years before Charles Windolph died at the ripe old age of 98 — he was born in 1851. Like many others who fought with Custer in 1876, Windolph was not American born; his birthplace was Bergen in Germany.

Accounts by survivors of the Battle of the Little Big Horn are prolific, yet comprehensive accounts by enlisted men are relatively few in number: Thompson's of C and Ryan's of M Companies come to mind, but the majority of the other versions are fragmentary and episodic. Windolph's version covers his service with the Seventh Cavalry from 1873 to 1876, though he served with the regiment for twelve years. He was not a sergeant at Little Big Horn, but a private in H Company under Capt. Benteen. His part in the action was conspicuous: he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour and the Purple Heart.

His account, which runs to more than 100 pages, relies heavily on memory, and as the events he was describing had taken place 70 years earlier it is not surprising that as regards specific dates there is inevitably a not insignificant number of errors. But in general his remarks are borne out by other accounts, and his impressions and opinions not inconsistent with those expressed by other participants. The second half of the work covers a variety of controversial areas of the campaign and, when it first appeared, seemed to represent a major contribution to knowledge on the subject. Much, however, has been published since 1947 on this campaign, and in consequence there is little here for the dedicated student of the battle, though the comments of the two authors seem reasonably fair and unbiased. Taken as a whole, however, the book does represent a valuable addition to one's collection of Custeriana. **FBT**

**'The 2/73rd at Waterloo' by Alan Lagden & John Sly; xvii + 236pp, ill.; available from Alan Lagden, 30 Mill Street, Brighton, Essex, CO7 0EL; £25 + £2 p&p.** A beneficial feature of modern pub-

lishing is the production of works for scholarship, often in limited edition, by small or independent publishers. The advantages are demonstrated admirably by *The 2/73rd at Waterloo*, a recent publication in a very limited edition of 200 copies.

The 2nd Bn. 73rd (Highland) Regt. (later the 2nd Bn. Black Watch) was one of the most distinguished at Waterloo, if for no other reason than the terrible casualties they suffered; as Dalton noted in his *Waterloo Roll Call*, 'At Waterloo the 73rd were literally cut to pieces'. Of their 27 officers on regimental duty at Quatre Bras and Waterloo, only five emerged unscathed; at one point the battalion was commanded by a lieutenant until their senior major arrived from staff duties to take command of the remnants. A study of such a battalion is therefore of obvious interest; but the depth of research involved here is quite staggering.

Every member of the battalion has been researched, from the commanding officer to the lowliest private, which provides one of the clearest pictures presently obtainable of the ordinary soldiers of the time. The biographical entries are often much more than merely a list of occupation, enlistment and previous service (though these alone are of immense value to the student). For example, we read of Pte. James Naughton, a Perth cordwainer of sal-low complexion, 'a good and efficient soldier but rather addicted to drink'; of James Boggins, ex-West-meath Militia, who survived the Waterloo campaign but then deserted; William Thorn of New Monkland, who volunteered from the Lanark Militia and died of wounds in the campaign, leaving a pathetic 8s.9½d. to his father; of the Saxon 'John Smith' from Erfurt, an ex-musician of the 60th Royal Americans who re-enlisted in the 73rd in a combat capacity, and whose 18 years' service resulted in a constitution ruined in the West Indies and a pension of 1/6½d. per diem; and of Ensign Robert Hesilrige, aged 18 at Waterloo and a direct descendant of Sir Arthur Haselrig, the cuirassier commander in the Civil War.

Illuminating though these biographies are, the book is given an additional dimension not only by the inclusion of unpublished accounts but by anecdotes from that most colourful memoirist, Thomas Norris. By comparison with the official rolls, the authors have identified many of the characters mentioned by Norris, and herein lies another fascination of the book. Such correlations make this an invaluable source for those studying the composition, social and military history of the British Army, and for those interested in the Napoleonic Wars in general.

Production is splendid, bound in cloth of the regimental facing-colour and including 14 plates, 8 of which are reproduced in colour, including the Goddard & Booth version of the regimental uniform, a stand of Col-



# Marlborough's Trophies (1)

## Infantry Colours Captured from Tallard's Army at Blenheim, 1704

ANDREW CORMACK

The battle of Blenheim is one of the most written-about events in British military history. Its fame rests on a number of factors: a great victory at the very beginning of the 18th century, following an unprecedented march down the Rhine; and the presence of two commanders on the Confederate side – our own Marlborough, and the Imperialist Eugene of Savoy, who for some unaccountable reason seems to hold a place of affection in English hearts not usually granted to foreign generals. It is, however, a battle which suffers from invariably being recounted in English terms – though some fine collections of documents were published by French scholars in the late 19th century. This article, and a future sequel on cavalry standards, attempt to summarise the French experience of the battle in the southern sector, partly through research into the identity of the regimental colours captured there.

This concentration on the struggle between Marlborough's and Marshal Tallard's armies is forced on us by the paucity of available records on the part played in the northern area of the battlefield by Marsin's army: a great deal more work needs to be done on the Marsin-Eugene conflict.

Tallard's order of battle at

Blenheim has constituted a fascinating puzzle to many historians. We know a great deal about it, but not enough finally to lay the subject to rest. I have tried therefore to distill the available research and to offer, particularly as regards the left wing infantry brigades, new information which does not appear to have been postulated before.

The attribution of the regiments d'Albaret and Bauderville to the left wing rests partly on linguistic evidence – d'Albaret pronounced is similar to 'de Beuil' and Bauderville is not too far from 'Belleisle'; partly to the fact that no regiments entitled de Beuil and Belleisle existed at the time; and partly to de Quincy's statement that Bauderville was killed on the left wing.

A comparison of contemporary documents has indicated that Tallard seems to have been 'economical with the truth' when reporting his cavalry strength back to Versailles, and that he retained in his army units which he was supposed to have given up. Furthermore, he did not declare the full number of squadrons which he received from the Spanish Netherlands. Merode-Westerloo's account, when compared with *La Campagne de Tallard* . . . , confirms these discrepancies of strength-reporting, but also raises other questions: e.g. why did Merode-Westerloo have a command in Silly's Brigade when his own troops were in Tallard's left wing?

### The Trophy Colours

If the written record leaves the researcher still hungry for knowledge, the pictorial record is just as bad. We cannot expect 'on the spot' battle art, but for Blenheim we do at least have Spofforth's print of the captured trophies – the

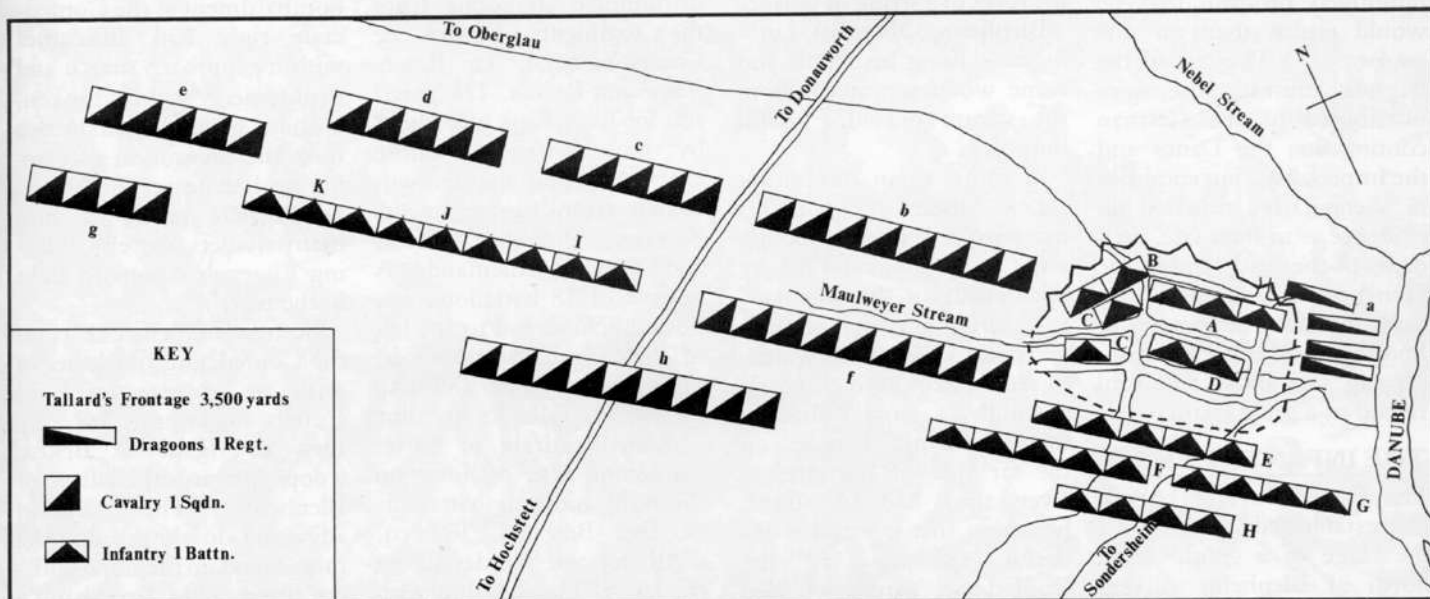
outward and visible reward for the troops' hardship and the commander's fine strategic thinking. Not only were these trophies recorded in picture form, but fortunately they were also described by 'some proper persons in the Office of Ordnance' at the behest of Robert Harley and Lord Granville. Fortunately indeed, for none now survive: Sydney Smith records that they had entirely rotted away by 1820.

Spofforth of course had no means of knowing to which

*Reconstruction of Tallard's order of battle at Blenheim. The units shown in CAPITALS were definitely in the position shown; those in lower case were present, but their exact location and brigading is unknown. Figures after the names indicate number of battalions or squadrons.*

Infantry: **A**, NAVARRE (3); **B**, ARTOIS (2); **C**, PROVENCE (2); **D**, GRÈDER ALLEMAND (2); **E**, Languedoc (2), Zurlauben (2), Nice (1); **F**, ROYAL (3), BOULONNOIS (2); **G**, MONTFORT (2), Senneterre (2); **H**, ST. SECOND (1), Blaisois (1), Auxerrois (2); **I**, ROBECQ (2), Tavannes (1); **J**, D'ALBARET (1), Montroux (1), Lassey (1); **K**, BAUDEVILLE (1), Chabillant (1), Aunis (1).

Cavalry: **a**, Dragoon Regiments: MESTRE DE CAMP GENERAL DRAGONS, LA REINE, VASSÉ and ROHAN (12). **b**, GENDARMERIE (8). **c**, Brigade de Broglie: DU ROI (3), MESTRE DE CAMP GENERAL CAVALERIE (2). **d**, Brigade de Grignan: GRIGNAN/FLESCHE (2), BOURGOGNE and others (3). **e**, Walloon Cavalry Brigade: HEIDER, ACOSTA, GAETANO (5). **f**, Brigade de Silly: ORLÉANS, FORSAT and others (9). **g**, Unidentified (4). **h**, Brigade de la Vallière: VALLIÈRE (2) and others (7).





The captured trophies paraded through the City to Westminster by the Foot and Horse Guards, January 1705. From the playing card set entitled 'Marlborough's Victories'. (British Museum, Prints & Drawings)

regiments the colours had originally belonged, though that lacuna did not stop him from attributing them to units known to have been at the battle. Modern French research comes to our aid here, but there is no equivalent British research into who precisely captured them. It seems clear that the majority were laid down by the garrison of Blenheim rather than being snatched out of the ensigns' hands in single combat. We can, however, say with certainty that the infantry colours were about six feet square, carried on an eight-foot pike, probably with a counter-balance to aid flourishing; and that the cavalry cornets were about two feet square, dragoon guidons being two feet in the hoist but somewhat longer in the fly.

The number of flags captured in the battle is agreed in all sources to have been about 300. It is known, however, that only 128 infantry colours and 35 cornets and guidons were sent to London and lodged initially in the Tower. This figure includes some which were shared out to the Dutch forces as their portion of the spoils, and which Marlborough borrowed back from General Hompesch to exhibit in London (on the unfulfilled promise that he would return them in due course . . .) The rest of the flags, we must suppose, were distributed to the German contingents, the Danes and the Imperialists, but enquiries in Vienna have revealed no evidence as to their fate. Students of the battle and of the French army in particular must therefore be grateful to Spofforth and Harley for preserving this most colourful record of a great victory.

### THE INFANTRY FIGHT

The Franco-Bavarian Army had established its camp on the ridge of a gentle slope north of Blenheim village,



128 Ensigns & 34 Standards, Taken at Blenheim Carried through City of London, set up in Westminster Hall Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> 1705

with the small town of Hochstett about two miles to the rear. The smaller part of the force, under Marshal Tallard, had been marching south after the Duke of Marlborough who, for the last few weeks, had been laying waste the rich lands of Bavaria, much to the annoyance of the Elector Maximilian Emmanuel II, who jointly commanded a larger allied force with Marshal Marsin. This latter army extended Tallard's lines of tents away to the north-west where the horizon was broken by tree-covered hills.

Tallard's right flank was protected by the Danube, and the ground to the Allies' front descended to a stream which meandered between marshy banks difficult of access. Although Tallard had little thought that a battle was imminent, the position offered further advantages in the form of a string of villages – Blenheim, Oberglau, Lutzingen – along his front, and some wooden watermills in the stream provided useful outposts.

It came as an unpleasant shock, therefore, for his troops to be woken at about 6 a.m. on 13 August 1704 by the beating of the 'Generale' and, struggling out of their tents and looking eastwards, to see five columns of Marlborough's army shaking themselves into 'battalia' on the far side of the stream. Even they had to admit, however, that it was a wonderful spectacle as the Confederate forces wheeled

into four great lines: the British by the Danube side, and the Hanoverians, Dutch, Wurttembergers and Prussians away to the left where, by now, Marsin's battalions were also rousing themselves to watch Eugene of Savoy's four columns of Imperial, Danish and Prussian troops moving slowly across their front.

Unfortunately no detailed, contemporary account of events appears to have survived from either the Allied or Confederate troops on the north side of the battlefield. Eugene's 18 battalions and 74 squadrons, although heavily engaged from about noon against Marsin's 42 battalions and 67 squadrons, did not make the decisive moves in the fight; and, while both commanders were offered opportunities to assist their fellows on the southern sector, it was only Eugene who made a significant contribution to Marlborough's conduct of the battle.

With choreographed formality the two armies adopted their positions, taking about two hours to do so<sup>(1)</sup>. Tallard could easily see that the main weight of the attack would fall on his sector, and he seems to have been particularly wary of a flanking move along the river bank. Fortunately the village of Blenheim offered a sturdy anchoring point here, and he assigned to the commander of this sector, the Marquis de Clerembault, 12 squadrons of dismounted dragoons from the regiments Mestre de Camp General, La Reine, Vassé and Rohan. The garrison for the village was found by nine battalions whose exact brigading is unknown, drawn from the regiments Navarre, Provence, Artois and Gréder Allemand. A reserve of 18 battalions was posted behind and to the left of the village. Northwards, opposite the slope down to the Nebel, Tallard's first line consisted entirely of horse; his second line, of horse on the right and nine battalions of the Brigades Robecq, d'Albaret and Baudeville on the left<sup>(2)</sup>. The junction with

Marsin's army was weakly formed by a force of cavalry (some of whom may have been fighting on foot as their horses had died of glanders) drawn from both armies. His third line constituted the cavalry reserve made up of the Brigade de la Vallière. Marsin's right, of 14 battalions<sup>(3)</sup>, was in and around Oberglau; his centre was 67 squadrons, and the Elector's infantry closed the left wing. Guns, of which the French had 90, were distributed along the entire front, with concentrations to the left of Blenheim and the right of Oberglau.

The battle started with an artillery duel at about 9 a.m. in which the Confederate army was out-gunned both in numbers (Marlborough had only 66 pieces) and in weight, only the lighter guns having been brought on the march down the Rhine. However, roundshot smashing through the wooden mills along the stream, and a threatened infantry attack, were enough to make the garrisons of those outposts abandon the buildings, setting them on fire to deny them as bridging points to the enemy. They were in any case too far forward to be supported from Tallard's line. During this time the French fortified Blenheim with barricades and earthworks, and the dragoons continued these defences down to the river.

Marsin's wing was less troubled by the artillery bombardment as the Confederate right had difficulties with its approach march and deployment over broken, wooded ground. Marsin also took the precaution of placing his line nearer the Nebel, which here broke up into many rivulets, thereby obliging Eugene's troops to fight in the marsh<sup>(4)</sup>.

Somewhat before 1 p.m. the Confederate attack began with an advance by Lord Cutts's column, led by Rowe's brigade of British troops, towards the village of Blenheim. The column advanced slowly through the morass and up the slope without firing, and Clerembault's



force, safe behind its barricades, poured its fire into the trudging redcoats. With the head of the column blown away, and receiving fire from either flank as well as directly in front, Cutts's men recoiled, and were only saved from a cavalry attack against their right flank by British squadrons and Hessian battalions advancing to cover them.

Cutts threw another assault at Blenheim, but met with similar lack of success: without close-range artillery support the village was impenetrable. His attacks had been pressed forward with determination, however, and Clerembault in a fit of panic gave orders for the entire reserve behind the village to join him. Tallard's attention was diverted to the centre of the field, and he does not appear to have noticed this extraordinary move; but it did not escape Marlborough's attention, and he gave Cutts orders to close up on the village, but not to press home any assaults, in the hope that this threat would induce Clerembault to keep his huge force locked in expectant inactivity in the

village.

Whilst the Blenheim fight was going on Marlborough had started to advance his centre across the Nebel, and with some difficulty had begun to form up on the French side. Tallard's right wing cavalry attempted to disrupt this process but without success<sup>(5)</sup>. Once stabilised, Marlborough's centre right was ordered to attack Oberglau; and ten German, Swiss and Dutch battalions of Brigadiers Heidebrecht and Wolfenbuttel were led on by the Prince of Holstein-Beck<sup>(6)</sup>. Oberglau was commanded by General de Blainville, amongst whose troops were the Irish Catholic battalions of Clare, Lee and Dorrington<sup>(7)</sup>. De Blainville's garrison gave the Confederates a rough reception, killing the prince and emerging from their defences to push them down the slope at the point of the bayonet. The cavalry south of the village also joined in the repulse of Holstein-Beck's column; and this first effective counter-attack of the day developed into a major cavalry threat to the junction of Marlborough's and Eugene's armies.

Marlborough resumed his containing attack on Oberglau and the centre's advance once the cavalry attack had been dispersed, and due to Clerembault's squandering of the infantry there was little opposition to be overcome. Only the brigades of Robecq, d'Albaret and Baudeville stood firm, and were mown down by the volley fire of the advancing British and Germans together with their artillery support.

Having disposed of Tallard's infantry the Confederates used their cavalry to hold the centre ground and to act as a flank guard while the infantry bore left-handed<sup>(8)</sup>, crossing the Maulweyer stream which ran through Blenheim, and marched round the rear, westward side of the village. There was no one to stop them, as Tallard's entire remaining infantry – 27 battalions – was crammed into a space about 400 yards wide by 600 yards long, its attention held by Lord Cutts's periodic, small-scale attacks. It is recorded that there were so many infantry in the village that they did not have room enough to manipulate<sup>(9)</sup> their weapons, and

the Brigades Royal and St. Second were seemingly at a loss to find something useful to do.

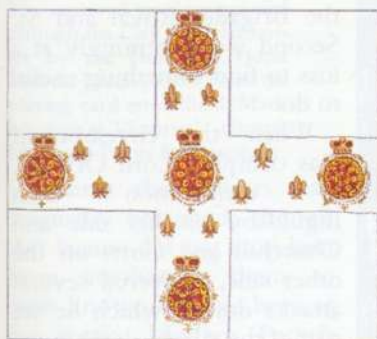
When the envelopment was complete Lord Orkney, in conjunction with Ingoldsby on his side and Churchill and Cutts on the other side, delivered several attacks during which he set part of the village alight in the hope of making the position untenable<sup>(10)</sup>. His infantry pierced the perimeter, but was unable to sustain a substantial foothold – although they swept the main avenues with their fire, forcing the French to take shelter in the centre of the cluster of houses and thereby denying them any extended space in which to form up and deliver fire.

continued on page 42

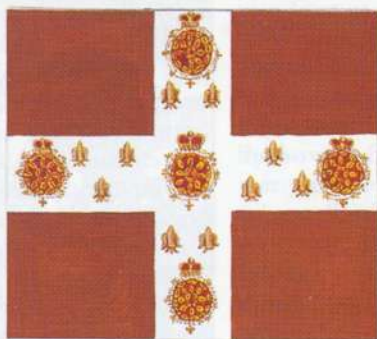
A Dutch print of the closing stages of the battle. Confusion reigns supreme as the Confederates push the French horse into the Danube in the foreground whilst Marlborough accepts Tallard's surrender in the left centre. Blenheim, right, and Oberglau, centre, are still surrounded by troops. The artist's viewpoint appears to be between Sonderheim and Hochstett looking north-north-eastwards. (National Army Museum)



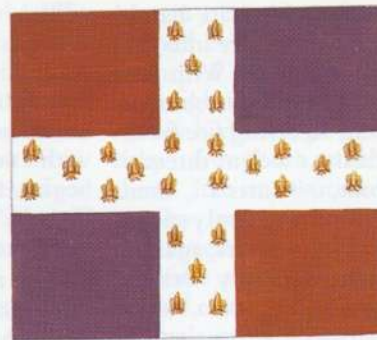




A1



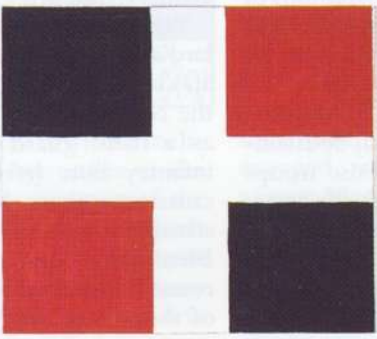
A2



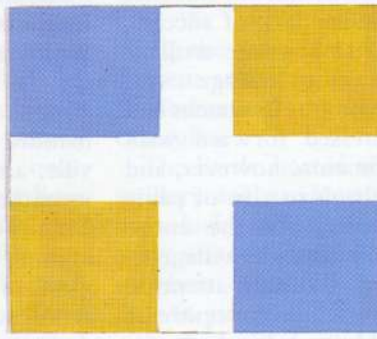
A3



B1



B2



B3



C1



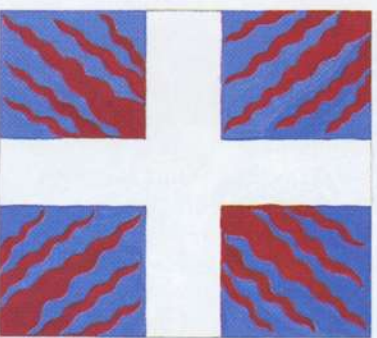
C2



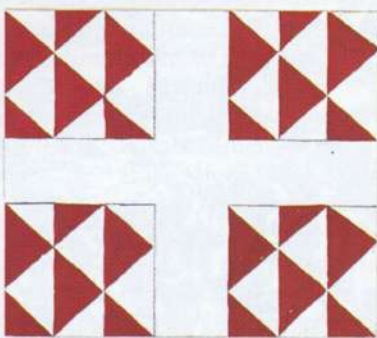
C3



D1



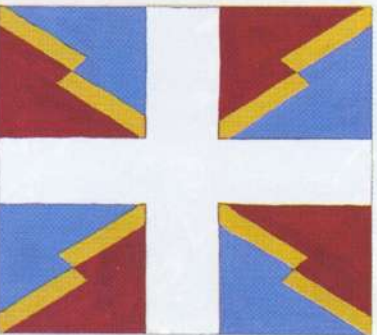
D2



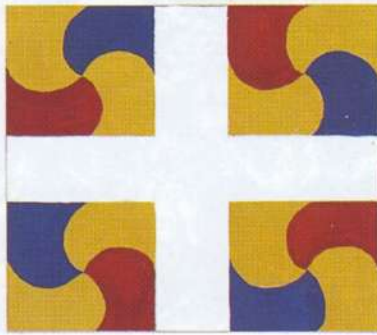
D3



E1



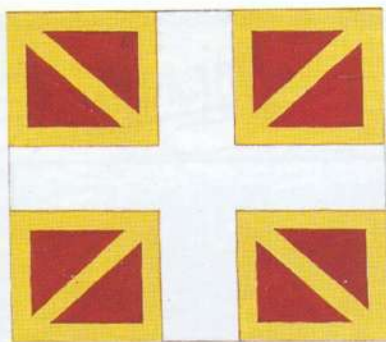
E2



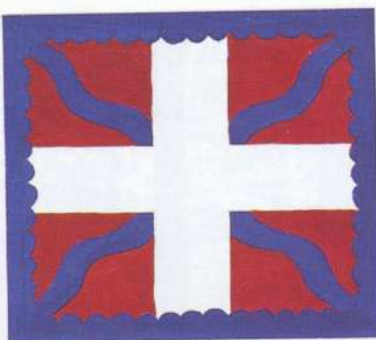
E3



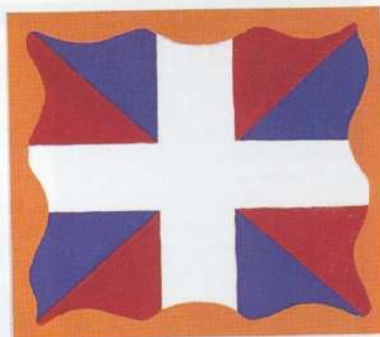
F1



F2



F3



Each company, theoretically 12 to 15 per battalion, carried one colour. The senior company of the first battalion was designated 'Colonelle', the 'Drapeau Colonel' usually being white but sometimes bearing additional devices. The colours of the other companies, designated 'Ordonnance', were identical throughout<sup>(15)</sup>.

A1: Navarre, Colonel  
 A2: Navarre, Ordonnance  
 A3: Royal, Ordonnance  
 B1: Languedoc, Ordonnance  
 B2: Provence, Ordonnance  
 B3: Artois, Ordonnance  
 C1: Gréder Allemand, Colonel (German)  
 C2: Gréder Allemand, Ordonnance  
 C3: St. Second, Ordonnance (Italian)  
 D1: Zurlauben, Colonel (German)  
 D2: Zurlauben, Ordonnance  
 D3: Montfort, Ordonnance  
 E1: Chabillant, Ordonnance  
 E2: Blaisois, Ordonnance  
 E3: Auxerrois, Ordonnance

F1: Tavnnes, Ordonnance  
 F2: Nice, Ordonnance  
 F3: Montroux, Ordonnance (Italian)  
 G: D'Albaret, Ordonnance  
 H: Régiment de Liege (Bavarian)  
 I: Guards of Cologne (Bavarian)  
 J: Unidentified Bavarian. (The Bavarian colours may have been taken at the storming of the Schellenberg.)  
 K: Ensign of the Régiment Royal, with Ordonnance company colour. (Flags painted by the author, fig.K by Peter Cormack)



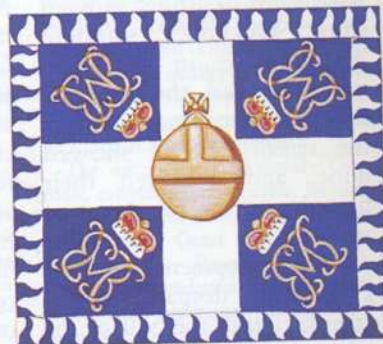
G



H



I



J





A two-part German print which shows an overall view of the battle as seen from the far side of the Danube opposite Blenheim in the upper half, and a close-up of the action in the lower half. Kane mentions only one bridge of boats, which broke up when the French horse crowded onto it in an effort to escape. (National Army Museum).

By this time, about 5 p.m., there was no effective command among the Blenheim brigades, although when precisely Clerembault lost his head and plunged to his death on horseback into the Danube is not known. The garrison command revolved upon the Marquis de Blanzac, who in the confusion was unable to assert control. No clearer indication of this can be found than the lack of cohesion and purpose of Brigadier de Nonville when he advanced with the Brigade Royal against Lord Orkney. The august Scot, observing this movement, which was supported by St. Second's Brigade, beat a parley and rode up to the French brigade with his ADC Sir James Abercrombie; demanding its surrender, he told de Nonville, truthfully, that the village was completely surrounded. Ingoldsby started to parley with St. Second along the same lines. An ensign of Royal showed some backbone, stabbing Abercrombie in the arm when he had the impertinence to seize a standard; but the senior officers showed none, and delivered their brigades up as prisoners of war.

This development prompted Orkney to despatch Abercrombie into the village to invite de Blanzac to enter into negotiations, at the same time sending other aides to his fellow Confederates to warn them of this parley and to ask them to suspend their attacks on the village. On learning to his surprise that there were still 20 battalions and a strong force of dragoons available to the French, Orkney drew up as many troops as he could find to await de Blanzac's arrival.



The Marquis must by this time have realised that a disaster had overtaken the centre and, in the absence of instructions but aware that the village was surrounded, he started to treat with Orkney, the weakness of whose force was mercifully hidden in the smoke and confusion. The senior officers were gathered together and several, among them the diminutive Vidame de Vassé, expressed themselves forcibly against surrender<sup>(11)</sup>. It was reported later that M. de Cigne<sup>(12)</sup>, the lieutenant-colonel of the Regiment de Provence, assembled six battalions and charged the encircling Confederates, breaking through and allowing one battalion of Provence to escape, though he himself was obliged to surrender; but the fate of the other regiments was sealed. Those which had done their duty must have found it particularly galling to be trapped and forced to yield after such a stout defence of the village, but there was no alternative. In frustration the Regiment de Navarre may have burnt a few of its colours; but nine of them were brought back to London and others probably found their way to Vienna<sup>(13)</sup>.

By 8 p.m. the battle had subsided: 11,000 infantry had

been captured, together with 58 guns and about 300 standards and colours<sup>(14)</sup>. The prisoners, as well as the trophies, were indiscriminately divided between the two main elements of the Confederate army, as much to reward the Imperialists for their contribution to victory as to share the burdensome responsibility of guarding and feeding the captured. Only 3,000 stragglers of Tallard's infantry escaped.

Lord Orkney wrote four days later: 'It is perhaps the Greatest and Completest Victory that has been gained these many ages . . . I hope the effect of this battle will be great.'

**To be continued: Part 2 will deal with the cavalry engagements, and illustrate captured standards.**

#### Notes and Sources:

(1) Useful preliminary studies of Tallard's order of battle have appeared in *Gorget and Sash* Vol.1, issue 4 and Vol.II, issue 1, 1981-2, by John Koontz.

(2) The names of these brigades are rendered by Sir James Abercrombie—letter in Northumberland Record Office Ref. 2CR9—as Robecq, de Beuil and Belleisle. The list of units in *La Campagne de Tallard en Allemagne, 1704*, Amsterdam 1763 p.321 gives d'Albaret and Baudeville with Robecq. De Quincy's letter quoted in *Memoires militaires relatifs à la guerre de succession d'Espagne*, Pelet and

Vault, Paris 1836-42, p.578 confirms that Baudeville was killed on the left wing.

(3) Marsin's right wing consisted of the Brigades Champagne, Bourbonnois and the Irish Brigade.

(4) *Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne*, R. Kane, p.50.

(5) The charge by the Gendarmerie. See forthcoming Part 2 of this article.

(6) See the Confederate Order of Battle in *Feldzuge des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen*, G. Ratzenhofer, 1879.

(7) 'A brief historical sketch of the Irish Infantry . . .', *RUSI Journal* p.445, 1904.

(8) Lord Orkney's letter with Abercrombie's: see (2) above.

(9) *Robert Parker and the Comte de Merode-Westerloo*, Ed. D. Chandler, London 1968, p.169.

(10) Orkney explicitly claims responsibility for setting Blenheim on fire. Merode-Westerloo's assertion that the French did so is ridiculous as it would inconvenience only themselves.

(11) *Memoires du Marquis de Sourches sur le regne de Louis XIV*, Ed. Cosnal, Paris 1888, Vol.9 p.62.

(12) *Idem*

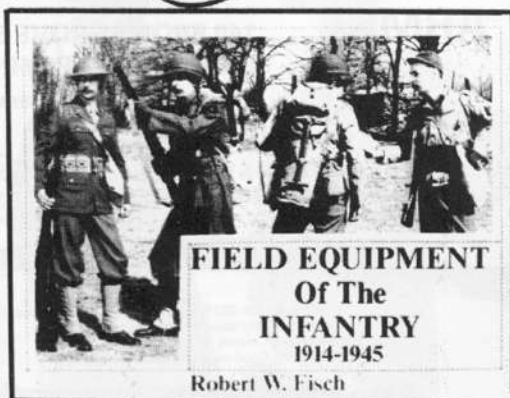
(13) *Histoire de l'infanterie française*, Susane, Paris 1876.

(14) *Marlborough as Military Commander*, D. Chandler, London 1973, p.148.

(15) The designs of the flags and standards in both articles are taken from Spofforth's print of the trophies; copies in National Army Museum; Royal Library, Windsor; and Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. Colour details, Public Record Office, WO 55/343 or British Museum, Blenheim Papers, Additional MS 61335, folios 192-198. Correct identifications 'Le Tableau des Trophees conquis par les Anglais à Blenheim 1704' by P. Charrié, *Carnet de la Sabretache*, No.1, 1977.



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## REVIEWS

continued from p.36

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'Duelling with Long Toms' by David Martin (51 Hanover Gdns., Ilford, Essex IG6 2RB; illus. p/bk, £4.95 inc. P&P), a privately-published book built around the diary of the author's grandfather, who served in the Boer War with the RGA.

## CARDS AND PRINTS

'Grossen Uniformenkunde' by Richard Knötel; facsimile reprint of the Babenzien edition, from Editionen Friese u. Lacina, Haidbarg 4d, D-2110 Buchholz i.d N, or from An der Falkenbek 1, D-2104 Hamburg 92, both Federal Republic of Germany. Available as loose plates or by subscription; 1,000 plates in full colour, 17 volumes; DM450 per vol. of 50 plates. Published in Germany between 1890 and 1914 by Maximilian Babenzien of Rathenow, this was beyond doubt the most ambitious and imaginative production of uniform plates ever attempted. Approximately 1,000 were published in 17 volumes; purchasers were able to buy the plates by subscription, and when a volume was complete a hardback binder was provided. The subjects ranged over

all the countries of Europe, but also included North America and Russia. The name of their artist, Professor Richard Knötel, is a legend among all who are interested in the research and study of uniforms.

The entire series are now being reprinted in Germany by two enterprising young publishers, U-J. Friese and Uwe Lacina, using a process which gives a result almost indistinguishable from the originals, on cream-coloured 170mm x 250mm card of high quality (240g weight); each volume is to be provided with an artificial linen portfolio which will be a facsimile of the original.

The emphasis is obviously German, ranging from Prussia, Bavaria and Saxony to all the minor states; but France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland, Russia, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and others are all represented generously. English and French translations of Knötel's original German texts appear on the reverse of each plate. The plates are despatched at intervals, and it is hoped that two to three volumes can be published each year.

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## GALLERY

# Dan Shomron

SAMUEL M. KATZ  
Paintings by RON VOLSTAD

The Israel Defense Forces take pride in the calibre of their commanders: men who have devoted their entire lives to the service of their homeland, and who can achieve rank only by the demonstration of leadership, tactical skill and courage. It is therefore little wonder that the leader of this exclusive group today, the IDF Chief of Staff, is Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron, a man who may be said to have been groomed for the post for more than 30 years.

Dan Shomron was born in 1937 at KIBBUTZ Ashdot-Ya'akov in the Jordan Valley. Although he was too young to take part in Israel's war of independence in 1948, the 12-year-old Shomron showed a precocious proficiency with a HAGANAH Sten gun. When the PAL'MACH defenders of Ashdot-Ya'akov rebuked Dan and his friends for playing with such weapons, he led the group of boys out to an improvised desert firing range, and practised with the Sten surreptitiously.

At the age of 18, in 1955, Dan Shomron was conscripted into the IDF - TZAVA HAGANAH L'YISRAEL, or 'TZA'-HA'L'. His physical fitness, intelligence, determination, and KIBBUTZ background made him an obvious volunteer for service with the paratroops. In basic training he showed great promise, though not unmixed with a willingness to press his opinions with determination. When his squad leader ordered him out of ranks for a dressing-down on one occasion, he obeyed, but disputed

his commander's right to humiliate him. Outraged at such insolence, the squad leader ordered Shomron to run around the flagpole until he 'saw the light'. Young Shomron was still running the next day. . . Throughout his military career he has enjoyed the reputation of 'a soldier's soldier', who was careful of the welfare and the dignity of his men.

### THE PARATROOP BRIGADE

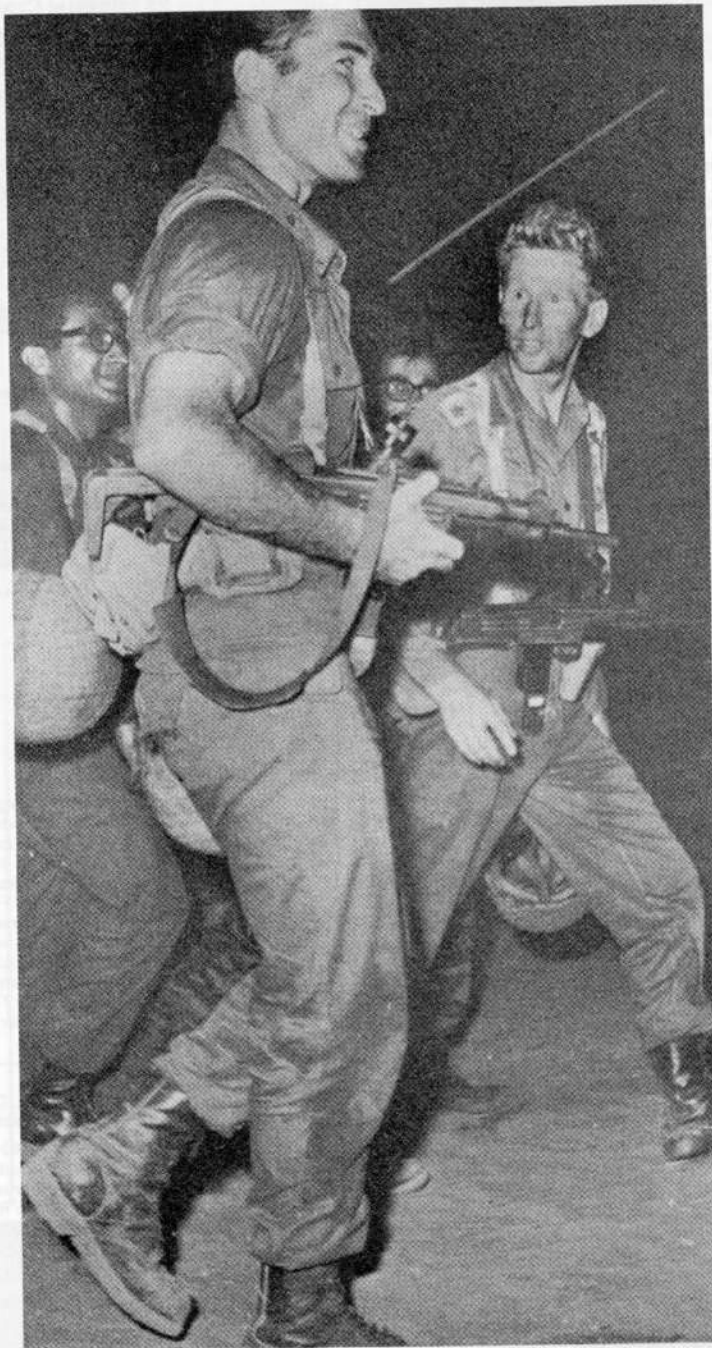
Service in the paratroopers, under the initial command of Maj. 'Arik' Sharon, was hard, even brutal. The original battalion, the 890th, had

been formed early in 1954; incorporating personnel from Shomron's commando 'Unit 101', it was in a stage of transition into a more conventional unit, though without losing its special 'edge'. Strong personalities were not lacking among the paratroopers.

Shomron advanced steadily through all stages of a junior leader's career, passing with ease the demanding courses for squad leader, officer, and platoon leader. He was assigned to the 890th Bn., now commanded by Maj. Rafael Eitan within a brigade-sized force designated 'Unit 202'. In its ranks the young platoon commander took part in numerous cross-border reprisal raids, as well as the October 1956 Suez Campaign, during which 'Unit 202', and particularly 890th Bn., were heavily engaged at the Mitla Pass. After the Suez Campaign Dan Shomron attempted to return to civilian life, but the experiment only lasted two years before he was back with the paratroopers.

'Unit 202' was now redesignated HATIVAT HATZANHANIM, 'Paratroop Brigade', and was steadily expanding. Capt. Shomron was one of the founding fathers of the new 202nd Bn., which joined the brigade in 1964. From 1965 to 1967 the paratroopers found themselves operating as a retaliatory force against guerrilla targets in Jordan and Lebanon. Shomron participated in all his unit's cross-border operations on the West Bank. Two particularly famous raids took place at Kilkilya on 4-5 September 1965; and at Samua on 13 November 1966, the latter a spectacular brigade-sized operation.

By the age of 29 Maj. Shomron, now commanding the Paratroop Brigade's elite reconnaissance battalion, SAYERET TZANHAMIN, had earned a reputation as a cool and cunning commander. His real rise to prominence was to come after Israel's lightning victory in the 1967 Six-Day War.



A smiling Capt. Dan Shomron (foreground) returns to Israel after the retaliatory raid against Kilkilya on 9 September 1965. Although French 'lizard'-camouflage fatigues were generally worn at this date, Shomron and other officers of the Paratroop Brigade's 202nd Bn. are on this occasion wearing standard IDF olive fatigues. (IDF Archives)



Shomron's SAYRETT was attached to the armoured division ('UGDAH') commanded by Maj. Gen. Yisrael Tal, which punched through Egyptian defences in northern Sinai. The para-recon battalion, equipped with jeeps mounting 106mm recoilless rifles, acted as a spearhead for Maj. Gen. Tal's Pattons and Centurions. They inflicted heavy losses in armour at El Arish and Kantara; and were one of the first IDF units to reach the Suez Canal. For his cool leadership under heavy fire, Maj. Shomron was awarded the ITUR HAMOPET medal for exemplary service.

### SENIOR COMMANDS

The IDF appreciated Maj. Shomron's talents, and he was promptly appointed to head the General Staff operations branch. During the War of Attrition, 1967-70, Shomron's planning was behind many of the most spectacular operations by Israeli elite units. These included the brilliant armoured crossing of the Suez Canal on 9 September 1969; and the audacious raid on Ras Arab on 27 December 1969, during which an Egyptian P-12 air defence radar installation weighing 15 tons was seized and safely brought back to Israel by NA'HA's paratroopers. Maj. Shomron personally took part in many special operations which are still classified.

In 1972 Shomron's career seemed to change course dramatically when he underwent tank training, seeking to broaden his all-round military proficiency. Upon completing the armour course Shomron was promoted to colonel, and received command of a conscript armoured brigade. When the Arab onslaught fell upon the poorly-prepared IDF defences on 6 October 1973 at the outbreak of the terribly costly Yom Kippur War, Shomron's brigade was operational on the southern front, in the armoured UGDAH commanded by Maj. Gen. Mandler, which was the first major formation committed in the



Sinai. Within 24 hours the division's tanks had suffered some 65 per cent casualties, largely at the hands of Egyptian troops using man-portable missile systems. Shomron's brigade of tank reservists saw very heavy fighting throughout the war on the southern front, including the great tank mêlée of 14 October – then the largest tank-vs.-tank confrontation since the Second World War.

Col. Shomron's record in three campaigns, and his background experience in both the paratroops and the Armoured Corps, fitted him for promotion; and in 1974 Brig. Gen. Shomron was appointed Chief Paratroop and Infantry Officer, with the brief of rebuilding IDF infantry potential to the most modern standards. Shomron worked feverishly to incorporate such weapons as the LAW rocket, TOW missile, M-16 and GALIL 5.56mm rifles into the infantry arsenal; and it was also during this period that a major effort was made to mechanise the infantry, and to integrate it with armoured forces in such a way as to avoid the repetition of the costly mistakes of 1973.

### Entebbe

While this contribution to TZA'HA's capabilities was of great importance, to the world at large Shomron's fame in this period rested on his leadership of the dramatic raid to rescue 103 Israeli and Jewish hostages from PFLP terrorists at Entebbe, Uganda, on 3 July 1976.

Shomron was instrumental

in co-ordinating this combined forces operation, using the best recon paratrooper and infantry units available in his command. 'Operation Yonatan', named in memory of the rescue party's commander and only fatality, Lt. Col. 'Yoni' Netanyahu, was an extraordinary achievement. At a distance of 3,800km from home bases, the rescue mission was carried out after just one week of preparation. Four Hercules transports began touching down at Entebbe Airport just 30 seconds behind schedule after a seven-hour flight; and just 57 minutes later the hostages began their journey home. Brig. Gen. Shomron was aboard the last C-130 to take off.

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Now a national hero, Shomron continued his rise through the ranks, including a stint as an armoured division commander, and as OC Southern Command. In 1983 Maj. Gen. Shomron was named as the IDF's first Ground Forces Commander, an experimental appointment meant to control the post-1973 strategy of 'combined forces'. Appointed Deputy Chief of Staff in 1985, Shomron finally achieved lieutenant-general's rank as the IDF's thirteenth Chief of Staff in April 1987.

He inherited an army brutalised by its five years in Lebanon, and faced by the growing threat of the greatly strengthened Syrian military – part of whose menace lay in an apparent willingness to consider introducing chemical warfare into the Middle

January 1988. Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron talks to a naval officer cadet on his graduation from Israel's 'Sandhurst', BA-HAD L. (IDF Spokesman)

Ron Volstad's colour reconstructions on our back cover show Shomron as (top): Captain, 202nd Paratroop Battalion, Jordanian West Bank, 1966. Shown during one of the several major cross-border raids in which he participated during the period, Shomron wears French airborne 'lizard'-camouflage fatigues, then in widespread use in the IDF's Paratroop Brigade, and standard Israeli-produced khaki webbing personal equipment, with a locally-made version of the US M-1 helmet. He carries the UZT folding-stock 9mm sub-machine gun, with two clipped magazines.

(Below) Lieutenant-General, Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff, 1988. This is the olive 'Class A' uniform worn by all land forces officers. The rank is indicated by the bronze metal crossed sword and branch, and two-leaves, worn on red backing on olive shoulder strap slides. The patches of Israeli units and formations are worn attached to a hanging tab from the left shoulder strap; this is the General Staff patch incorporating the sword-and-branch, anchor and wings of the three branches of the IDF.

We offer our apologies for the omission of master parachutist wings – worn on the left breast, on the green backing indicating reconnaissance unit service. On his left collar is the silver sword-and-branch pin worn by all graduates of the officer's course; on his right pocket, the 'flaming sword' operational service pin. His ribbons are those of the ITUR HAMOPET (plain blue), and the campaign ribbons for Lebanon, 1975, 1967 and 1956. On his left breast pocket is the armour qualification pin – reflecting the reason why Shomron, as a former paratroop officer, wears the Armoured Corps black beret with his General Staff cap badge. Typically, a Beretta 9mm pistol would be tucked into the back of the belt as a personal sidearm.

East equation. Yet Lt. Gen. Shomron's greatest challenge will be leading the army through the Palestinian intifada in the occupied territories. Although some elements of the Western media have developed an inaccurate image of the Israeli soldier as a brutal occupier, the reality of the situation is far more complex. It will take a resolute IDF, under a flexible and far-sighted Chief of Staff like Lt. Gen. Shomron, to see Israel through this threat, as so many times before. **MI**



# Dan Shomron

*Captain, IDF 202nd  
Parachute Bn., 1966*



*Lieutenant-General,  
IDF Chief of Staff, 1988*

